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LA GUARDIA



A BIOGRAPHY BY
JAY FRANKLIN

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La Guardia

La Guardia:

A BIOGRAPHY *by Jay Franklin*

RESEARCH BY JOSEPH C. BAILEY



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CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	I
1. THE REMAKING OF AN AMERICAN	5
2. THE MAKING OF AN IRREGULAR	28
3. THE MAKING OF A PROGRESSIVE	59
4. "AMERICA'S NO. 1 MAYOR"	101
5. RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY	156

FOREWORD

THIS is not an authorized biography. In many ways it is not a biography at all. It is, rather, an attempt to discover how a man of the "newer immigration" made himself the Mayor of the largest city in the Western Hemisphere, what that achievement means for the public life of the American people and, if possible, what it portends for the future of our political institutions.

In attempting this, I have enjoyed access to several of the individuals associated with Mr. LaGuardia's past career and present activities, who have been most helpful in supplementing, by personal reminiscences and anecdotes, the information which is generally available in the files of the metropolitan newspapers, "The Congressional Record" and the various magazine articles dealing with the Mayor's personality and achievements. Particular gratitude is due to the officials of the Department of State and of the Labor Department at Washington for their cooperation, and to the staff of the New York Public Library. Mr. LaGuardia himself has been kind enough to permit reference to his early diary and to his newspaper writings, and has devoted a few hours of his time to an honest effort to persuade me that his political biography cannot be adequately written on short notice or within a definite time-limit.

That is quite true. No man's life can fairly be appraised until he has been dead for at least twenty years, and even then requires at least ten years of careful research to discover and

weigh the material which has survived the passage of time. Yet at this moment in our national development, it seems well worth while to discover, not so much what such a man as LaGuardia is really like, but what his career may mean for us, his contemporaries. It may cast light on the historical process of American democracy and give us a hint as to our future.

In some ways, I am exceptionally qualified to do this job. The Mayor of New York comes of Italian-Jewish parentage. I come of that old New England stock which still considers the Italians in this country as simple ditch-diggers and market-gardeners. My background is Eastern and rural, his Western and metropolitan. In appraising Mr. LaGuardia's Western career I have, fortunately, enjoyed the help of a well-grounded Westerner, who is competent to understand what it means to have been brought up beyond the water-tower. When LaGuardia was an aviator in Italy, I served at the Embassy in Rome and had personal acquaintance with many of the officials who directed or benefited by his activities. When he was in Congress, I was learning the worms-eye view of New York so quickly acquired by a police-reporter on a metropolitan newspaper. When he was making history during the last two years of the Hoover Administration, I had a front-row seat in Washington at the State Department. When he was preparing to run for Mayor of New York City, I was helping Langdon W. Post, his present Tenement Commissioner, navigate the rapids of the Technocracy movement. I was with the New Deal in Washington while LaGuardia was making it work in New York. Vastly dissimilar in origin and background, our trails have crossed again and again and we have come, I feel, to share a somewhat similar outlook on American affairs. Yet in all this time, I have never met LaGuardia more than two or three times. I am friendly to what he is trying to accomplish; I am not his friend.

If such a book as this is to be written at all, it must be writ-

ten quickly. There may be gaps in the data, lagoons which could only be discovered years later, or simple oversights. I owe much to the thoroughness and industry of Mr. J. C. Bailey, who has assisted me in gathering and evaluating the material which has gone to the making of this book.

It is written under pressure at a critical moment in the world's history. As I sat at my typewriter, word came that Governor Herbert H. Lehman of New York had attacked President Roosevelt's proposals to reform the Federal judiciary and it seemed probable that his whole program of domestic reform in the United States would have to be adjourned for another year. The papers told of Japan moving in on Peiping and detaching North China from its allegiance to the Nanking Government. A great battle was raging outside the walls of Madrid, to determine whether Fascism or self-government should become the political way of life in modern Spain. The whole world is restless; there are strikes and massacres; wars and rumors of war; signs and portents of deep and lasting changes in the system of civilization under which we all have been nurtured.

Because Fiorello H. LaGuardia has placed himself near to the vortex of this world-wide maelstrom, by becoming administrator of one of the great cosmopolitan centers of modern life, his career is significant beyond the ordinary. If we know what LaGuardia means and what will become of him and his work, we can say with greater assurance what will happen to us all during the next generation. That is why I feel at liberty to trespass against the normal rules of the biographical art and to study the man who, though a Western American, is considered a typical immigrant, the man who was a New Dealer before the New Deal, the man who is quite as much America's representative in New York City as he is New York's official ambassador to the people of the United States.

If any individual has been inadvertently misrepresented in

the course of this narrative, he is requested to supply the information which will enable me to enter a correction in subsequent editions of this essay in political biography.

1. THE REMAKING OF AN AMERICAN

I

THE YEAR 1882 may yet become famous as the period during which, among others, two babies were born in the southern part of New York State. Neither knew of the other's existence then or for many years thereafter. One of them was born in a wealthy residential community a little north of Poughkeepsie, the only child of rich parents whose independent fortune came from the China trade and from fortunate investments in railway and river transportation systems and Pennsylvania anthracite. He was born into a life which relieved him of any necessity to earn his own living, and by rare good fortune was able to surmount this handicap. His father and mother gave him the name of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

The Roosevelt baby was born on January 30, 1882. The other came into the world in a crowded Italian tenement on Varick Street, New York City, on December 11, 1882. His parents gave him the name of Fiorello Henrico LaGuardia and let it go at that. Fiorello means "Little Flower", a maternal fantasy which was later to be both an asset and a hindrance to the man who bore it — asset because it appealed to the growing political self-consciousness of the masses of "new immigrants" who became the dominant electorate in New York City, hindrance because it encouraged the less picturesque-minded Irish and Nordics to paint him as a florid, emotional, temperamental little "foreigner" whose success in politics was amusing in the same way that Dr. Johnson considered a dancing dog remarkable — remarkable not because it danced well but because it danced at all.

1882 was a year of portents which, as usual, went unheeded. It has been noted that the volcano Krakatoa in the Dutch East Indies exploded shortly afterwards and that for a year thereafter the fine volcanic dust floated about the stratosphere, to the amazement of the scientists, treating the world to the spectacle of unequalled sunsets which should have suggested the death of a civilization. Instead — also as usual — the world simply admired the sight and then forgot about it. The time was closer to Lee's surrender at Appomattox than we are to the Armistice of November 11, 1918. The City of New York was still recuperating from the scandals of Tammany's Tweed Ring which had looted the city treasury. The Supreme Court had just about completed the process by which the Fourteenth Amendment was held not to apply to the Southern Negroes so much as to the Northern corporations. The railway kings were fighting for a Western empire. Standard Oil was the one big Trust and the Morgan firm was beginning the process of consolidating the transportation facilities of the United States. The country, as a whole, had entered upon the post-Civil War era of hard times, low farm prices, financial panics and industrial upheavals which was to fetch up in a major political reform wave in the 1890's.

Immigrants were pouring in to man and overman the great industries which had sprung up since the Civil War. They were bringing alien ideas with them, ideas of direct action and of social justice, which did not comport with the full stomach of 1880 capitalism. Unrest was attributed to the Fenians, to the Molly McGuires, to the Communards who had escaped from Paris after the Third Republic had crushed the world's first Communist Revolution. The writings of Darwin and of Karl Marx were working like yeast and America was suffering from growing pains.

President Garfield had been assassinated by an angry office-seeker and it looked as though the Democrats, who had been

cheated out of the Presidency in 1876, would put their man in the White House at the next national election. So Civil Service Reform had become suddenly alluring to Republican office-holders and young Theodore Roosevelt was alternating between New York politics and Western ranching as a life-career. The administration of an industrial republic was beginning to introduce problems more serious than those imagined by Jefferson, Jackson or Lincoln, and the great cities were beginning to take form as the dominant force in national life as the Western farmers' hopes were shattered by drought and grasshoppers, and the defeated Southerners toiled amid the ruins of their agrarian slave-empire.

Of all this, the LaGuardia family knew little or nothing. They had come to the land of opportunity with a very definite idea of the sort of opportunity they would find. They had no intention of remaining in New York. They were heading West, to the Army posts where a trained band-musician could always find a job.

For Achille LaGuardia was an expert cornetist and had the canny Italian faculty of landing on his feet. It is true that he gave his son an exclusively American background and upbringing, but national temperament is something more than a matter of environment, and racial heritage means a good deal even in the great open spaces of the West. To the Americans who think in stereotypes, the Italian is a creature of passion, of vehemence, of easy emotion and dramatic action — something between an organ-grinder and a Sicilian vendettist, with perhaps a touch of Caruso or Mussolini. This is a protective coloration which the harsh history of their country has forced upon the natives of the Italian peninsula and to which the dash of Oriental blood which leavens all Italy lends support. The fact is rather different. It is the Anglo-Saxons and Germans who are emotional, unstable and impetuous. The Italians are shrewd, intelligent, a little dour and with a highly developed

sense for the possible. They are the best conformists in the world. They are also the most cool-headed — even cold-blooded — race in Western Europe. They are a mixture of many races, bred for sheer survival through the greatest catastrophe of Occidental history: the collapse of the Roman Empire. Saracens, Northmen, Visigoths, Huns, Lombards, Greeks, Jews, Gauls, Spaniards, Persians, Negroes and Slavs have contributed to their ancestry. Out of this mixture has emerged a type which makes the American “melting-pot” look like a childish experiment and which makes itself respected and at home anywhere in the world. Those who think of the Italians as mere musical emotionalists should consider that Napoleon, Mussolini and — yes — Alphonse Capone came of this race and were distinguished more for their lucid and clean-cut intellectual processes than for any mist of emotion or sentimentality.

This is because the Italians are the most articulate of modern European races. They have the habit of speech and gesture for the expression of thought, where the Anglo-Saxons bottle themselves up and often stew wordlessly in a fog of thunderous indecision, from which may emerge a lightning-stroke of all but aimless action — such as a lynching or a war or an election. The Italian generally knows what he is doing and why, because he is able to say so to others and thus to himself. To the Northerner this uncanny facility with words implies superficiality, lack of tenacity, irresponsibility. It is a good thing for the Italians that this is so. Otherwise, they would have been ground out of existence by their many conquerors throughout the centuries.

At the time the LaGuardia couple came to America there was no particular point and pride in being an Italian. The Kingdom of Italy had been established for a bare decade and the glories and miseries of the national future lay ahead. All that appeared was the fact that the Pope regarded himself as

the "prisoner of the Vatican", that Italy existed only by permission of England, France, Germany and the hated Hapsburg Empire of Austria-Hungary. Taxes were high and opportunities were limited. The best prospect for many an Italian was the steerage which carried him to America or the Argentine. For Achille LaGuardia of Foggia, it was a little better than that.

Foggia lies on the west coast of the Adriatic, in a dusty malarial plain which is both desolate and depressing. Achille LaGuardia, however, mastered the cornet and took service in the East Indies with the regimental band of one of the European garrisons in the hot tropical empires which cluster around the Indian Ocean. Those were the days when the colonial powers were making the belated discovery that regular exploitation of the resources of their possessions was more profitable than improvised loot and were laying the foundation for the self-satisfied doctrine which was later baptized by Kipling as "the White Man's Burden". It was the heyday of commercial colonialism. The machine-gun, the bombing plane and poison-gas had not been invented, but the superior ordnance and equipment, the more intelligent organization and discipline of the Europeans, were unchallenged. Despite the interesting events which had occurred in Japan, it seemed unlikely that any Asiatic race was capable of self-defense or self-government. The East was dotted with garrison-towns and regiments which prided themselves on the excellence of their mess, the superiority of their horses or the fineness of their band. No military bandsman of ability need beg for a job in such a system. LaGuardia did well for himself and, after a number of years, was sent back to Italy on regular furlough.

While in Trieste, he met Irene Coen Luzzatti, a Venetian girl of Jewish origin, with whom he fell in love and whom he finally persuaded to marry him. Origins are perhaps the most important part of history, for without them we are unable

fully to understand or evaluate later actions. The Mayor's mother was a Venetian Jew, a fact which was neither generally known nor considered particularly important until somebody ferreted the facts out of the archives at Vienna, shortly after his election to the office of Mayor of New York.

It so happens that the Venetian Jews came to "La Serenissima" after the Inquisition had driven them out of Spain and Portugal, and that Irene Coen Luzzatti was descended from a family which had formerly lived at Lisbon. It may be unpopular to say so, during this era of totalitarian antipathies and affinities, but there is a very wide variation between the several types of Jew developed in Europe during and since the Middle Ages. There is a greater difference between a German and a Ukrainian Jew than between a Connecticut Yankee and a Louisiana creole. Between the Iberian Jews of the Sephardim and the Ottoman Jews there is the difference between a Scandinavian and a Hittite. By common consent, the Spanish and Portuguese are the aristocracy of Judaism. To grasp this fact, one need only contrast Justice Benjamin N. Cardozo of the Supreme Court — who is of Portuguese Jewish ancestry — with the vaudeville "character" comic Jew of yesteryear. These racial distinctions within the Jewish community go far to explain the history of persecution, for there never yet was an oppressed people — Jewish or Gentile — which did not develop many of the traits of indirection and evasion which are so exasperating to their persecutors. One might almost deduce that the cure for "the Jewish problem" as envisaged by the Aryan evangelists lies in the complete abandonment of persecution, but that is probably too simple an idea for the human race to grasp.

The point is here of considerable importance. At the time when the LaGuardias came to this country, to be an Italian or a Jew was to be something between an economic helot and a third-class citizen. This was particularly true of the industrial

East, where the Italians were in demand as ditch-diggers, road-builders, the men who do the rough and dirty work which every nation tries to put off on somebody else, and where the Jews were regarded as essentially pushcart-peddlers, old clothes dealers, pawn-brokers and tricksters who were trying to push their vociferous way into the tidy Anglo-Saxon parlors. To come of Italian-Jewish parentage in New York City in the 1880's and 1890's would have permanently crippled Fiorello LaGuardia's subsequent career.

He was destined not to live in New York until his twenty-fifth year. His father had come to live in America, in the land of the free, as a musician in the United States Army, and Varick Street, New York, was simply a stopping-off place which proved convenient when their first-born made his urgent appearance in this strange unruly world. He was headed for life with the "real" Americans, not with the semi-aliens who lived on sufferance, clotted in the great cities of the East. Reveille and taps, squadrons in the saddle, and over all the great arch of the Western sky in the rough-and-tumble land where no one cared (or dared) to ask where his neighbor came from so long as his neighbor minded his own business and carried himself like a man.

For LaGuardia was brought up in the true American melting-pot, the Western ranges of the pioneers, the settlers, the adventurers, the cowboys, the remittance-men and the 11th U. S. Infantry. He never was an "East Side alien" or a "little Wop". He was and is a Western American. This is tremendously important. Remember it now and later if you want to understand his political career.

II

Westward went the self-reliant little military cornetist, the Venetian Jewess and their small black-eyed son to the Army Posts and the last frontier of the white race.

The West of the 1880's was still the wild and woolly domain of the cowboys and the cattle. The Indians had been beaten back but the Battle of the Little Big Horn was still recent in memory and the settlers were slowly trickling westward to take up sections along the line of the railways. It was still the West of Teddy Roosevelt and Ernest Seton Thompson, the West of Buffalo Bill, and above all the West of the U. S. Army.

After the glorious memories of the Civil War the Army had slowly settled down to the starvation appropriations of post-war American politics. The South had learned the lesson of secession and the Indians, bar a few raiding Apaches in the Southwest, were drifting with the buffalo away from the advancing army of ploughmen. The ploughland and the reaping-machines were making Chicago a metropolis almost overnight. There was gold in the Black Hills, there was silver in Nevada and Colorado, Denver was already a cosmopolitan center of saloons and opera-houses when Oscar Wilde came a-lecturing. There were mountains of copper, there was coal and iron, and, still unsuspected, there were great pools of oil. The cattlemen were kings of ranches larger than European provinces. The age of Jesse James had passed but Billy the Kid was creating a new saga. Badmen held up stage-coaches and the world's adventurers were flocking in to loot a half-continent. It was all a little fabulous, incredible, zestful, bracing, with over all the reek of sweating horses, the "U. S." brand on their hairy flanks, the rattle of carbines, the bugles crying clear and far in the thin Western air, and the comfortable regularity of Army rations and Army pay against a backdrop of self-reliant privation such as the nation had not known since the Civil War and was not consciously to experience again until the Great Depression.

The LaGuardias followed the Army, first to South Dakota where Fiorello's brother, Richard, who has since died, was born, and then to Fort Huasteca in Arizona, in the wake of the

war against Geronimo and the dreaded Apaches. Finally, Achille LaGuardia's unit settled down at Fort Whipple, outside of Prescott, Arizona. Here a sister joined the family and this became "home" — the only settled abode Fiorello LaGuardia was to know for many years.

He was brought up like any other healthy boy at an Army Post. His early ambitions included a desire to be a cornetist like his father — a passion which subsided into a deep affection for symphonic, particularly Wagnerian, music; he also wanted at various times to become a jockey, a prizefighter and a journalist. In the meantime, he attended the High School at Prescott, an institution of rather limited facilities, which constituted the only formal scholastic education the young Westerner was ever to receive. He even wrote a column for the Prescott paper on doings at the Fort, under the names of "Arizona Pete" and "Alkali Ike". In later years, as so often happens, he was constantly to run across his former schoolmates and to recollect through the golden haze which enshrines a happy childhood the friends of his youth. The point is that he received a Western rural American upbringing and that he did not master the Italian language until much later in his life, when he learned it of necessity in the American Consular Service at Fiume. He is a product of McGuffey's Readers and the Three R's and has none of the precocity of the slumbered children who supply so many of America's municipal politicians and racketeers.

Before he had completed his fifteenth year, an event occurred which was later to supply him with many constituents in the Twentieth Congressional District of New York. To Prescott, a week late, came regularly copies of Joseph Pulitzer's famous *New York World*. It contained lurid accounts of Tammany corruption in New York City and other sensational developments in the furious struggle for circulation against Mr. William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal*.

In the course of this battle of the journalistic giants, American eyes were focussed on the Spanish atrocities in Cuba. The battleship "Maine" was blown up in Havana harbor. William McKinley's Assistant Secretary of the Navy was the same Theodore Roosevelt who had distinguished himself as a ranchman and political reformer, and Mr. Roosevelt was anxious to try out the new battle-fleet. The result was a spasmodic explosion of "manifest destiny" which hurled the country, almost without its knowledge, into a war with Spain.

The 11th infantry was ordered from Fort Whipple to Tampa, Florida, for embarkation against the foe. The bandmaster went with the regiment and young Fiorello wrote the editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and offered to be the paper's Tampa correspondent without salary if his fare from Arizona to Tampa were paid. The offer was accepted in the casual manner which characterizes an American newspaper faced with the possibility of increased circulation and sure-fire reader-interest. So Fiorello gratified his early ambition to become a reporter at an age when young Franklin Roosevelt was still moving decorously up through the forms at Groton School, headed for Harvard and hoping that "the School" would beat St. Mark's at the next football match.

Tampa was a tough town for the Army. Patriots had rushed to the rescue of the soldier boys with barrels of unwholesome meat — the "embalmed beef" whose flavor somehow taints the whole hilarious adventure of this "short and joyful" war to the tune of "A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight". There were typhoid, dysentery and other unpleasant and even unmentionable diseases to take their toll of the volunteers and the regular Army rank and file. When the excitement was past, Achille LaGuardia had contracted dysentery and had eaten some of the putrid meat with effects that were to prove fatal within a comparatively short time. So Fiorello accompanied his family on a pathetic search for health to distant Budapesth,

in his mother's native Austria-Hungary. There the little cornetist died, leaving his eighteen-year-old son to fend for himself and to contribute to the support of his mother.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt was entering the glorious class of 1904 at Harvard, Fiorello Henrico LaGuardia found himself alone in a civilization and city as strange to him as Calcutta or Omsk, thrown on his own resources in a cold and unfriendly world. The Army friends who might have helped him were four thousand miles away. His only equipment was a sturdy physique and an alert and friendly disposition, which was forced to become pugnacious as the price of survival.

The result, thirty-seven years later, is everlastingly to the man's credit. Blessed are they into whose soul the iron of life enters as soon as they are strong enough to bear it. In LaGuardia's case, adversity produced both a man and a mask. The mask is a stubby, plump little figure — five foot two in height — with thinning black hair, active black eyes, quick gestures and a verbal fluency which is almost frightening and which so frequently becomes part of a current of uncensored thought as to lead him into difficulties. This is the mask which was later to carry the old Fourteenth Congressional District against Tammany, to become a fighting aviator on the Italian front, a one-man political party for ten years in Congress, a hot-water Mayor of the City of New York. The mask has been much advertised as "made in Italy," a "typical immigrant," a "scrappy, grotesque little ball of fire, a hard campaigner and a natural-born showman."

The man is something different. The man is still the Western boy, who lived with and loved the "old" Army, who drank in the national tradition of America which the East and the South had long since lost and which the West is now losing under the financial pressure of corporations which have learned the gentle art of bribing whole communities with their own money. His background is the background of Henry Clay,

Abe Lincoln, the elder LaFollette, George Norris and other men who saw America steadily and saw it whole. The man is sensitive, diffident, eager to promote the Anglo-Saxon concept of the common good, to foster self-reliance and to contribute, without thought of personal advantage, to the welfare of his fellows. As he talks, the man looks out through the mask and the mask itself melts away. If it were not for the fact that his name ends in two vowels instead of two consonants, he would long since have been considered of Presidential calibre. As it is, that final "ia" may not be as damning in another few years as it is today.

For he is the product of his background, as well as of an unusually active career. This part of this study must concern itself with backgrounds. Few men rise above them, all men are governed by them, consciously or unconsciously. His father had accidentally given him the sort of an American background which makes the Bostonian or New Yorker seem provincial, almost foreign. Now LaGuardia was forced to learn the ancient art of protective coloration — the art which the Italians in America and the Jews in all countries have been forced to acquire as a condition of survival. The Little Flower was to be roughly transplanted, several times, and each time he was to flourish more strongly than ever before. He had to learn to adapt himself to new environments and to use in unfamiliar surroundings the experiences he had acquired elsewhere. It is the hardest lesson any youngster has to learn. Once mastered, it is the key to a successful career.

III

Budapesth is one of the world's most magically beautiful cities. The Tartar castles of Buda overhang the strong sweep of the Danube like something imagined by Howard Pyle. The gypsy violins sing in the little wineshops in the old city, and St. Margaret's Island floats like a jewel set between white stone

bridges. At night, when the lights are lit along the river, it is lovely with a loveliness which makes the heart ache. It must be one of the meanest cities in the world in which to find yourself young, a foreigner and without a job.

After his father's death, Fiorello did what any American stranded abroad would do. He wrote to every Consulate in Austria-Hungary asking for a job, any job. He was lucky — perhaps the U. S. Army, which tries to look out for its own people, had something to do with it.

Late in 1900 he got a temporary clerkship at the American Consulate General in Budapesth. A few months later he heard that the job of Acting Consular Agent at Fiume was going begging. It paid the magnificent salary of \$300 a year; so no one else wanted it. With the characteristic inconsequence of American bureaucracy, our State Department was opening a diplomatic duel concerning the port of Fiume with the offer of \$300 a year and the strong expectation that its consular representative would have to be recalled in disgrace.

Here was the situation. Unnamed State Department officials have been quoted as saying that "LaGuardia was the worst headache in the history of the Department". This is a tribute indeed from an organization which has been periodically famous for its extraordinary envoys. The fact is that LaGuardia was expected to make a nuisance of himself at Fiume for good and sufficient reasons. The Royal Hungarian Government was anxious to make Fiume a rival of Hamburg and Bremen as a port of embarkation for emigrants bound to the United States. After some negotiation, the Hungarian State Railways made an agreement with the Cunard Steamship Co. to supply 35,000 emigrants a year. In return, the Cunard Line agreed to supply the service to America.

Word of this arrangement finally came to the ears of the authorities at Washington, who recollected that such contracts were in direct violation of the American Immigration Laws.

The State Department addressed a polite note of inquiry to the Foreign Office at Vienna, only to receive a categorical denial that any such contract had been arranged by the Royal Hungarian Government. The State Department addressed a polite note of inquiry to the Foreign Office at London, which answered that, since the alleged contract had been arranged between a British corporation and a foreign government outside of British jurisdiction, it must respectfully refer all inquiries to the Royal Hungarian Government. This nettled the State Department — which recognized a royal run-around when it saw one — so they decided to make more direct inquiries. A famous crusader against the “White Slave” traffic was sent to the Upper Adriatic to investigate for the American Government. His inquisitive activities annoyed the Austrian officials. One evening when he returned to his hotel from a pleasant beer-garden, he caught the hotel-clerk opening his mail. He leaped the desk and ordered the man to take his hands off his letters. Whereupon, as if by magic, Austrian policemen appeared, arrested the crusader, threw him in the jug, and next morning deported him as an undesirable alien.

Under these circumstances, the State Department believed that it might be well to pretend to take the Austrian assurances at face-value and to assign a very minor Consular official to handle the clearances and bills of health for the new Cunard immigrant service at Fiume. At the same time — officials being human — it was understood that the American Consular official involved might just as well make things a little unpleasant for the Royal Hungarian Government and the Cunard Line. So when Fiorello H. LaGuardia, who was barely eighteen, received his assignment from the Budapest office he had a pretty clear idea of what he was expected to do.

Victory over the Spaniards had technically made the United States what is known as a “world power” — ability to deal out homicide at long range with impunity being the

standard test of international prestige — but Austria-Hungary was an old and mighty empire and was not prepared to stand any nonsense from the upstart Americans. Young LaGuardia, however, had made a careful study of the quarantine regulations and thought he knew the answer.

The first Cunarder was ready to sail from Fiume, her steerage packed with emigrants, when the steamship agents sent word to the Consulate that the boat was ready for final inspection and a bill of health. LaGuardia arrived aboard and was met with the usual genial British invitation to step into the Captain's cabin for tea. He replied that he had brought a doctor on board and proposed to hold a medical examination of steerage passengers, as prescribed by the American regulations. The further information was advanced that the line would have to pay the doctor's fee. The British had never heard of anything so preposterous and flatly refused to submit to such an arrangement. LaGuardia replied that if they refused he was entirely willing to return to the Consulate and wait. In a little while the agents sent up the Bill of Health to the Consulate for his signature. It was his turn to give a flat refusal. He would not sign until the medical examination had been held under his supervision. There was hemming and hawing but demurrage charges are high and the line submitted under protest. The doctor made his examination, discovering several emigrants with trachoma and other excludable diseases. These were removed from the ship, and the vessel sailed with a clean Bill of Health in the purser's office and fury in the hearts of the officials concerned.

The Royal Hungarian Government promptly protested to Washington and this time the State Department could afford to laugh. No reply was made other than a routine acknowledgment and a statement that the American Government would regard with interest the outcome of the experiment in medical inspection instituted by young Mr. LaGuardia. This incident

is important in that, for the first time, Fiorello discovered the art of making a nuisance-value of himself and helping the common people at the same time. Those were the years when unscrupulous steamship agents — anxious to obtain traffic for their lines — were combing Central Europe and luring simple people to sell their property and go to America. A heart-rendingly large number of these emigrants were stopped at Ellis Island and shipped back to their port of embarkation, completely impoverished. The elementary precaution of giving a medical examination in Europe was finally accepted by the Cunard Line, and twenty-five years later LaGuardia had the satisfaction of voting for an immigration law which provided for sending regular physicians of the Immigration Service to foreign ports, as attachés of the American Consulates, to supervise medical inspection of immigrants according to the practice of the Department of Labor.

He had won his fight. Henceforth, like all American officials who distinguish themselves by their zeal, he was a marked man. In the meantime, he settled down snugly into the Consular Service and devoted himself to the studies appropriate to his age. For three years he was shuttled about between Fiume, Budapesth and Trieste, in clerical positions, until his twenty-first birthday made him eligible for final appointment as Acting Consular Agent at Fiume in December, 1903, on the princely salary of \$1,000 a year. For Fiume in 1904 and 1905, this was a small fortune. It was more than most Austrian officials received. The cost of living was low. There were good music, beautiful women, a delightful climate — all the *gemuetlichkeit* of a pre-war Central European city. There were a number of foreign consuls in the port. The British, as usual, had a kind, fatherly old gentleman who looked out for the interests of his American colleague and gave him sound advice. There was also a young Turkish Vice-Consul who was interested in the lighter side of life. There were swimming,

evenings in beer-gardens, concerts, sports, flirtations and the high spirits of young men with an assured income in a pleasant foreign country. It stands to LaGuardia's credit that in this period of lotus-eating he found time to master Italian, German, Croatian, Magyar and some French.

Then, like a thunder-clap, came the affair of the Archduchess Maria Josefa. An Austrian Archduchess was very important in pre-war Europe and this was years before Armageddon. The Divine Right of Kings was still a principle in the Hapsburg Empire and Republics were regarded with some of the distaste now lavished here on fascist or communist dictatorships. The Archduchess came to Fiume and expressed a gracious desire to witness an embarkation of emigrants. Everybody snapped to attention and promised Her Highness that it would be done that afternoon. The day happened to be Monday. The ship on which the emigrants were to sail was due to depart on the following Saturday. All arrangements were made and the agents of the line came to LaGuardia's office with a request to clear the "Pannonia" at once.

The young Consul refused. To put the emigrants aboard in the steerage meant that they must lie in crowded quarters without ventilation for five days. Moreover, the American quarantine regulations provided that emigrants should embark at the last practicable moment before sailing, in order to avoid risk of epidemics. Then all officialdom broke loose in *kaiserlich und koeniglich* Fiume. The Captain of the Port came to the Consulate, the Chief of Police followed him; the officials got higher and higher in rank, more and more urgent in their demands. The Archduchess was waiting! Finally LaGuardia decided the heat was too great, so he closed the Consulate for the day and disappeared. The Customs officials, the secret police, the army of Hungarian functionaries began to comb the little town for the missing Vice-Consul. He was nowhere to be found. The gates of the city were watched and police-stations

on the several roads were warned to stop LaGuardia. Realizing that a search would be made, he had decided that the safest place in the city would be at the house of the man who was leading the search party, so he chose that afternoon to pay an official call on the wife of the Captain of the Port and, while her husband was raging through the city after LaGuardia, his charming wife was having a delightful tea with the little American Vice-Consul. The Archduchess missed her parade of emigrants, the Cunard line refused to allow them aboard the "Pannonia" without the proper papers, and the officials of the Free Zone at Fiume refused to admit them back to the emigrant barracks. The poor human cattle spent a wretched night on the pier, and everybody blamed LaGuardia.

The Royal Hungarian Government promptly protested to the State Department that Fiorello had deliberately insulted the Archduchess. Our Ambassador at Vienna, the ineffable Mr. Bellamy-Storer who was later to create a serious diplomatic incident, sent the Vienna A.P. man down to Fiume to investigate. It looked like curtains for Fiorello. But the spirit of John Hay was still strong in the State Department and the American Government did not see fit to recall an official who had refused to violate our quarantine laws in order to amuse a highborn Austrian lady.

Contrary to the general impression, LaGuardia did not leave the Consular Service as a result of this incident, though his resignation followed shortly after it in 1906. The reasons for his return to America were complex and mature. He had been reading Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives* and came to realize that there was an America of which he knew nothing — the life of the great cities of the East where the old European pattern of palace-and-slum threatened to repeat itself with disastrous effects upon American society and democracy. "T.R." was in the White House and the country was astir with the progressive ideas which were to come to expres-

sion in 1912. Then, too, young LaGuardia met a Vice-Consul who had been thirty years in the Service and did not know what was going to become of him. He also met an American Consul-General of twenty-five years' service who had just heard through grapevine channels that his job had been given to another aspirant with greater political claims. The Consul-General had been out of America so long that he had lost all business and other contacts which might enable him to make a fresh start in his middle age. Finally, LaGuardia realized that he was having things much too soft for a young man. He loved Fiume, the music, the women, the drinks, the prestige; his office required only two or three hours of work a day and his income was sufficient to support a bachelor in luxury. Only those who have experienced the lotus-eating life of a young American official in a land with a "good" rate of exchange and a tradition of gracious and civilized living, can appreciate the wrench it was for young LaGuardia to chuck over his job and return to the harsh competition of life in New York.

Of course, he had it all figured out — he had not Italian blood in his veins for nothing. He had served with credit and even distinction in his post. He had been promoted on merit. He could speak five languages beside English. Surely there would be no difficulty in breaking into a business career back in America, especially since he had saved the large sum of \$200 over and above his fare home, on which to live while finding the right sort of job. On May 31, 1906, he resigned from the American Consular Service and headed westward.

IV

In his great expectation he was, like many other youngsters, grievously disappointed. The world is a pretty tough nut to crack at twenty-three, and in the dog-eat-dog civilization of New York he was just a "bright young wop" who'd wasted most of his life in the West and in Europe. His money dwindled

rapidly. He tried to get a government job. William Loeb, Secretary to President Roosevelt, tried to persuade him to stay with the Consular Service. In a very short time, said Loeb, it would be made a regular career service just as it was with other great nations, and LaGuardia would be in on the ground floor. As it happened, this change did not occur for nearly twenty years, such is the numbing inertia of patronage in a democracy, and in 1924 Congressman LaGuardia was able to vote for the Foreign Service Bill which Loeb had said in 1906 was coming so soon. Moreover, the specific post which Loeb wanted LaGuardia to fill was as Consul at Aden, the hottest spot in the British Empire, but native caution, plus the dire vision of condescending British officers sipping lukewarm whiskey-and-soda by the shores of the Red Sea, prevailed over the impulse to snatch at anything.

He once landed a job with a business house but when he discovered that his employers intended to send him to Peoria, he rebelled and started looking again. He next secured temporary employment with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, translating those sections of the French penal code which related to the legal status of children. He worked with a publishing house, studied stenography and was employed as a stenographer until his appointment, after examination, as an interpreter for the Labor Department at Ellis Island. He reported for duty on November 12, 1907, and remained there until his resignation on December 28, 1910, at the salary of \$1320 a year.

This period corresponded with one of the great peaks of American immigration — the greatest single migration in the history of the white race. Europe was banking up the demoniac forces which were to explode in 1914 with a crash that weakened and partially destroyed Occidental civilization, and those peasants and workers who could scrape up the fare were fleeing to America as though from a plague. The year that

LaGuardia entered his duties at Ellis Island registered the greatest influx in the records of the Labor Department. He was one of a staff of approximately forty translators and his work was with the Hungarian, Croatian and Slovenian dialects common to the Adriatic littoral of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

This was the "new immigration" which was to become so potent a factor in American life, thirty years later. The Irish, the Germans, the Scandinavians and English who had provided the bulk of American immigrants before 1890 were dwindling to a thin trickle, while the floods of Central and Southern Europe broke upon the New World in millions of Italians, Poles, Czechs, Slavs, Russians, Ruthenians, Greeks, Jews.

It was both a great challenge and a great opportunity. Just as he had found the emigrants at Fiume the victims of petty abuses and official persecution, so in New York the bewildered immigrants were at the mercy of one of the strangest, harshest, most sentimental and most corrupt social systems the world had ever seen. As Tammany Hall had demonstrated for years, the man who could make himself useful and indispensable to the poor and foreign-born of a great polyglot metropolis had his hand on tremendous political power.

LaGuardia had deliberately thrown in his lot with New York. To make his way in New York meant that he must throw in his lot with the foreign-born population of the city. He had to unmake himself as a Western American and become a synthetic alien if he was to forge ahead in his chosen city. All the advantages were now on his side. He knew America far better than did any member of Tammany Hall and he knew that the Republican Party was firmly in the saddle and could not long or easily be displaced. His Consular Service had left him on good terms with official Washington and his interpretership on Ellis Island would help him with the Immigra-

tion authorities and the Federal Courts of naturalization. His mixed ancestry was now a positive asset and he was familiar with the countries and conditions from which most of these immigrants had so recently escaped. He was familiar, too, with the fierce longing for political liberty and the hatred for the class distinctions of the Old World which had produced his potential clientele. He knew that what was later to be known as "hyphenism" was non-existent among the new immigration, whose members were only too eager to forget the European maelstrom, although he may not have suspected the depth of the sentimental "hyphenism" which was to crop up among the third, fourth and fifth generation descendants of the English, Germans and Irish who assumed to speak for political America.

It was a perfect set-up for a lawyer who was prepared to be content with small fees and great influence; so LaGuardia undertook to make himself a lawyer. Like many an aspiring Tammany henchman, he studied law at New York University night school, receiving his degree LL.B. in 1910, and was admitted to the New York State Bar in the same year.

In the process, he had become completely denaturalized on the surface. Four years before, when he returned from Fiume to make his way in the world, he had been an enterprising Westerner with five years' experience of Europe, a nationalist by tradition and with his eye on Washington. Now he was an "Italian-American", a lawyer who was prepared to use the Italians, the Jews, and the despised Southern Europeans, in exactly the same way that Tammany had used the New York Irish and Germans of an earlier generation. Ancestry and accident had thrown an Arizona schoolboy plump into the middle of a tremendous human movement, originating in the heart of Central Europe and sweeping into North America with an urgency which should have given warning of great events to come.

The warning was not heeded. The crisis of the Russo-Japa-

nese War had been surmounted without catastrophe. After an unbroken historical friendship of nearly two hundred years — a friendship which rendered war “unthinkable” — England and Germany were engaged in a spectacular naval race and world-wide commercial and maritime competition, but the international bankers were on the job and disputes were swiftly smothered one after another. There was some uneasiness in the Balkans, but that was only normal, and it was forty years since any two “great” European nations had fought each other, nearly a hundred years since there had been a general European war. The cost of living was showing a tendency to rise but the era of violent industrial disputes in America seemed to have passed, and political reform seemed not only desirable but even possible. Taft was in the White House, but Wilson was Governor of New Jersey and the Democrats controlled the House of Representatives, while the beloved “T.R.” might at any time come back and take control of the Republican Party.

LaGuardia had picked his time wisely and he could have chosen no better place than New York City or more promising career than as a political lawyer at the end of 1910. He was twenty-eight years old, a bachelor, fully prepared to engage in one of the most rewarding free-for-alls recorded in history. For the next ten years he was destined to be known as an Italian-American, as a pugnacious, vituperative, scrappy little “dago”. But what else could you expect of the “East Side”? He had mastered the art of protective coloration so completely that more than twenty-five years later people were still to think of him as “typical” of the New York slums and of the “new immigration” whose rise provided him with the makings of a major political career.

2. THE MAKING OF AN IRREGULAR

I

LA GUARDIA's decision to leave Ellis Island seemed abrupt. Like his decision to resign from the Consular Service, it came about as a result of long-range considerations and immediate prospects. He had his law degree and he had worked as a Court stenographer in New York night courts. He did not like the bureaucratic side of life in the Immigration Service, where he had already been reprimanded for "talking too much" and where he frequently worked 10 and 11 hours a day. He consulted some of his superiors and colleagues, who gave him the possibly not disinterested advice to get out of the service and use his "connections". Within a few days he resigned and set up as a lawyer in the lower section of New York.

It looked like a sure thing. Immigrants from Southeastern Europe were pouring through Ellis Island by the hundred thousand. He *had* good "connections" and was finding his feet in the jungle of New York City politics. If he remained "regular", there was plenty of legal brokerage a young Republican lawyer with his experience and background could expect from both the Federal authorities and from the "new immigration". Actually, of course, he was stepping into the most turbulent decade of American politics since the almost forgotten Civil War, the most turbulent decade in world politics since Waterloo — a decade in which men and careers were to be tossed like chips on Niagara Falls, a decade in which not regularity but opportunism and luck were to supply the key to survival, let alone success.

New York had at that time much of the glamour which surrounds a dying era of growth and corruption. The age of Stanford White and Harry Thaw was passing, but Delmonico's and Sherry's were still on Fifth Avenue and the city seemed to have struck a breathing spell, if not its maximum growth. The country was recovering from the Panic of 1907 and, as is conventional after a major financial scandal, retrenchment disguised as reform was in the air. Living costs were rising and the city was restive beneath a rather smug cosmopolitan surface. It was neither the town of O. Henry nor the town of Dos Passos and F. Scott Fitzgerald, but it still had some of the hearty sentimentality of the former and some of the querulousness of the latter school of metropolitan self-consciousness. It was still a good town in which to make a career, as neither financial depression nor political unrest could daunt the electric energy of the rocky little island which floats like a ship between the Hudson and the East River.

Greenwich Village, where LaGuardia made his home, had not yet become the Manhattan equivalent of the Latin Quarter of Paris. There were few premonitory signs of the tremendous stimulus to American literature and the other creative arts which was to come from the flood of war profits, the curtailment of foreign travel and the extinction of European art and artists in 1914. Sinclair Lewis and William Rose Benét were still Yale undergraduates, and Edna St. Vincent Millay had not yet entered Vassar. Inez Milholland and the cause of Woman Suffrage, which reflected the growing economic feminism of the Twentieth Century, were still around the corner. The liberation of Eastern American women from the taboos of family dependency and the redirection of American attention upon American themes and problems still lay far ahead. Art was still derivative from Europe and though Theodore Dreiser was still a portent and Mark Twain an institution, there was no rush for cheap lodgings, cheap restaurants

and easy Art on the part of the American "student" class which was later to convert Greenwich Village first into a Montparnasse and then into a tawdry Montmartre for rubber-neck tourists.

It was still a section dominated by the Irish but with a growing population of Italians on whom a young lawyer with an Italian name and a drag with the Federal authorities could depend for clients. LaGuardia was never a successful lawyer, as America understands success. He never made much money and the largest fee he ever earned was the \$27,000 the Hylan Administration paid him in 1922 to act as Special Assistant Corporation Counsel of New York City as attorney in a condemnation suit against the Citizens Water Supply Co. (private company) to reduce the award claimed by it. He found that he had no taste for the petty squabbles of little people and the gist of his advice in most cases was to settle it out of Court. This advice was generally as welcome as that of a physician who tells a hypochondriac that there is nothing wrong with the latter's nervous system. Disgusted clients went away to find a "real lawyer" but after they had been stung often enough, they perceived the dollars-and-cents (and the equally important hours-and-days) angle of Fiorello LaGuardia's advice, and came to rely on him more and more as a sort of one-man arbitration committee and a one-man legal aid society. The practice of the law, then as now, was inseparable from the practice of politics, but there was already a great distinction between law as practiced on the frontier by Lincoln and law in a big city. The leisure which agriculture permits at certain seasons lends itself to Court House politics and the best country lawyer is he who can win the most decisions for his clients in pleadings before a jury. It was — and still is in many rural sections — the best and almost the only form of free intellectual amusement for the mass of grown men. In the city, such leisure as is enjoyed by the poor comes in the evenings and such forums as they have the time to

enter are those of the corner saloon or the neighborhood beer-garden. To attend sessions of the Court, either as spectator, plaintiff, defendant or jurymen, is to interrupt their daily labor and jeopardize their livelihood. In addition to which, an increasingly large number of legal causes are removed from the hands of time-consuming juries and disposed of summarily by magistrates. In a large city, the best lawyer is he who can save his clients the most time and money. This distinction is important, for it explains why the Lincoln-type of lawyer has ceased to dominate our legal system and has yielded to the administrative, corporation attorney who is paid to keep his clients out of Court. Despite his frontier background, LaGuardia found himself instinctively an administrative lawyer for the poor and underprivileged, whose legal knowledge was appreciated only as it saved them trouble.

The defect of such a system of time-saving metropolitan justice is that it lends itself to improper political influences. Tammany controlled the judges and the Courts and, after one particular decision had been rendered against LaGuardia as a result of Tammany influence, the Little Flower felt impelled to go into politics. A friend of his, a shrewd old restaurateur and political power of lower Sixth Avenue, encouraged him in this ambition. He was also encouraged by the general political situation.

The pattern of politics under the Republican era which had lasted without substantial interruption since the Civil War had introduced a new rhythm in American public life. About once a generation, the great corporations and centralized banking interests, which had grown up under the National Banking Act, the Fourteenth Amendment and the protective tariff, would grind out a financial crisis and an industrial depression. These crises and depressions were only partly attributable to the greed, incompetence and dishonesty of individuals. They were a direct and natural result of a system which encouraged

these lusty qualities in the belief that somehow out of them would flow the goods and services required by the mass of the people. Whenever such a crisis arose, however, it was natural to blame the individual economic and political administrators of the nation and to demand a change. In the nation, this change took the form of the temporary installation of a Democratic administration at Washington, while Republican control of Courts and State Governments was always sufficient to block serious change. The Democratic President would introduce reforms — frequently labeled as honesty and economy — which imposed a few slight controls over business, and then the Republicans would come back into power, rested, rid of some of their less competent leaders, and exceedingly hungry for the rewards and privileges of office.

In New York City, which has been controlled by Tammany Hall since the Civil War, this process was reversed. The same reform movement which put a Democrat in the White House would install a Republican or anti-machine Democrat in the City Hall. Whenever this happened, there would be a wave of municipal reform, always in the name of honesty and economy and efficiency, which the people of New York could stand for just about four years. For exactly as the National Republican Party distributed the loaves and fishes to the large industries, so the Tammany Democrats distributed largess to the poor of New York, under the guise of charity but always in the reasonable expectation of political gratitude at the next election. When the reformers moved into the City Hall, they had no substitute to offer for this elementary form of relief; they abhorred favoritism and were unwilling to go before a judge or whisper in his ear to "let poor Mike off easy as he has a wife and four kids and has promised the priest to go straight"; hating patronage and wasteful administration, they reduced the number of City jobs and scrutinized city contracts with unkind intensity. The "goo-goos" — Good Government men — did not

realize that American city dwellers do not want good government so much as they want congenial government. Therefore, four years had proved in practice to be about as long as the voters of New York City could endure reform and reformers.

In 1910, however, both the City and the Nation were working up to one of the great periodic spasms of revolt against their own lax habits. The Panic of 1907 had left the usual trail of scandals in high finance. The Administration of President Taft, with the usual Republican obtuseness, had tried to head off the coming revolt by an upward revision of the Tariff which contained more than the usual number of unjustifiable bounties, with the result that the Democrats had captured control of the House of Representatives in 1910 and the entire country was drawing together its energies for the great political struggle between Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt and Taft in 1912. In New York City, the corresponding movement which was to elect John Purroy Mitchel mayor in 1913 was also under way.

From the practical point of view, LaGuardia had to be a New York City Republican — and an irregular one, at that — if he were to get anywhere in a political career. Where the Democrats had cornered the Irish vote, the Republicans had won a majority of the Italian vote throughout the nation, and with a Fusion Administration on the way in the City it would have been folly for the young Western lawyer to identify himself with Tammany Hall. It proved almost as hard for LaGuardia to identify himself with the Republican organization, which was in more or less friendly cahoots with the Tammany outfit, under a sort of general understanding that reform waves come and go but politicians must eat all the year around.

Fiorello was still naïve in his political attitude. He knew that Tammany was corrupt but his own Republicanism was the forthright Republicanism of the West, which T.R. had borrowed and applied to national affairs. It was not until 1916

that LaGuardia took the full measure of the County organization headed by Sam Koenig, the Republican opposite number of Charles F. Murphy of Tammany Hall, and by that time he had discovered that the only secret for his advancement lay through irregularity. The machine had little to offer a young man who, for political purposes, must be considered an Italian, and the price of that little was anonymity, conformity, obedience and regularity. A minor judgeship was about as much as they could offer at the end of the political trail. The same tactics of irregularity and self-advertisement which were to make national institutions of LaGuardia's fellow-westerners — T.R. (by adoption), Borah, Hiram Johnson, George Norris, Bob LaFollette and Burton K. Wheeler — were required in New York City if the Little Flower were to be anything more than a very small cog in a very big machine.

He dipped into politics in the earthquake election of 1912 — who could keep out of it? — as worker for a Republican election captain in the Fourteenth Congressional District: the section between 4th and 14th Streets, the Hudson and the East River. That was the year which saw Republican strength reduced to its lowest since the Civil War, as a result of the Roosevelt Progressive movement. Two years later, he took his first chance.

The World War had broken out and the upheaval in the affairs of the human race, which had so far confined itself to a political overturn in American politics, was destined to convert the issue of democratic reform into a life-and-death struggle throughout the Western hemisphere. So far, in America, the War had evoked only anxiety, a pretty general but academic sympathy with the Allied cause, and a hearty thankfulness that America was well out of it. The economic dislocation which accompanied it had brought hard times to the United States, which were appropriately blamed on the Democratic downward revision of the Republican high tariff. The Repub-

licans were growing in strength in the City, and Mitchel was installed as a reform Fusion Mayor at the City Hall and had not yet had time to make the investigation of the City charities which was to turn the anger of the Catholic Church against him and lead to the election of Judge Hylan in 1917.

One evening, LaGuardia happened to be in a Republican Club House where the District leader was making up the ticket for the coming elections. Every place was filled except the nomination for Congressman and the leader was phoning to precinct captain after precinct captain, asking if they had anyone who wanted to run for Congress. As in Budapest, a thankless job was going begging, and finally LaGuardia offered to make the race. The leader was elated and asked for LaGuardia's name. He wrote down "LaGuardia" and then asked for his first name. "Fiorello" was too much for him and he demanded someone with a name the voters could spell. LaGuardia answered simply that before the campaign was over he would teach the voters how to spell "Fiorello". So hopeless was the fight that the Republican boss acceded and gave the young lawyer the nomination for Congress.

It was concededly a hopeless fight. The incumbent from the 14th District was Michael Farley, a genial Tammany politician who also represented the wholesale liquor interests and contributed generously to both Democratic and Republican campaign funds. The first rally at which LaGuardia asked to speak found his name at the foot of the list. The evening dragged on without reaching the foot, and when he protested that he was the Republican candidate for Congress, he was told, "Hell! we have a Congressman!" Farley represented both parties! This infuriated the Little Flower. He argued that Farley was "unbeatable" only because no one had really tried to beat him. He bought an open second-hand Ford for \$100, parked it outside the door of Republican meetings and addressed the Republicans as they came and went to hear other speakers. He taught

them to spell "Fiorello" so successfully that when the votes were counted, Farley's margin of victory was only 2,000. Later years were to prove that LaGuardia is a dangerous candidate to beat. It proved to be so in this case.

The Republican organization was impressed with his showing and as the G.O.P. candidate, Whitman, had been elected Governor, the Little Flower received his reward in the form of an appointment as Deputy Attorney-General for New York State. It ought to have been enough for any Italian. It wasn't enough for a Western American. At this stage in his career, LaGuardia was already benefiting from his camouflage as an East Side alien. The machine treated him as such. He reacted like a Republican Progressive. The result was baffling to the bosses.

He resumed his canvass against Michael Farley the day after Election Day and continued it right up to election day of 1916. Such zeal was scarcely reasonable but the machine has ways of taking care of petty insurgents. He had been rewarded with public office and Sam Koenig had no intention of letting him run again in the 14th District. By then, LaGuardia was feeling his strength and he had already met a talented and beautiful young dress-designer, Miss Thea Almerigotti, a girl who had been born in the Trieste he knew so well, with whom he went to dances and on walks in Central Park to whom he confided his plans and ambitions.

When the time came to file for nomination, LaGuardia was told that he had already had the honor of representing the Party and that the Republicans proposed to put up a fine, clean-cut young American, a Harvard graduate of a good old Republican family who had already represented the Party as Assemblyman at Albany, and who had made a generous contribution to the campaign fund. His name was Hamilton Fish, Jr. This evidence of financial and political privilege enraged the young Deputy Attorney-General. He replied that he had

not known that the Republican nomination was for sale and that he would make an independent fight in the primaries to beat Fish on just that issue!

They argued with him to be reasonable. They pointed out to him that he had a great future ahead of him in the Republican Party. They begged him not to injure his chances by headstrong action. He refused to be reasonable. Either he would get the nomination for Congressman from the Fourteenth District or he would publicly wash all the Party's dirty linen in a hot primary campaign conducted along the same lines which had piled up his very respectable total of 5300 votes against Michael Farley two years earlier. They capitulated: Hamilton Fish, Jr. was withdrawn from the race and redomiciled up-State in the 26th District, where in due time he was elected to Congress as the representative of a Republicanism so adamant as to amuse the entire nation. This time, LaGuardia won. The 1916 election — the "He kept us out of war!" prelude to Wilson's second Presidential term — marked reorganization of Republican strength and gains which gave the G.O.P. control of the House of Representatives. The vote in the Fourteenth was: LaGuardia 7,200; Farley, 6,800, with two other candidates trailing.

Thus ended the only period in the life of the Little Flower when he was off the public pay-roll for more than a year. His five years in the Consular Service had been followed with four years in the Immigration Service. He had practiced law for four years — not very remuneratively — and on his appointment as Deputy Attorney-General resumed that comfortable contact with the bi-monthly pay check which is one of the great and noble consolations of American public life. He continued to hold this office, after his election, until March, 1917, when he went to Washington to attend the Special Session of Congress which Wilson had been forced to convene to consider the grave national problem forced upon the American Govern-

ment by Germany's revival of unlimited submarine warfare in February, 1917.

II

The European War, which in 1914 had been an interesting series of dramatic events both fascinating and repellant to Americans, had by 1917 become a major political issue. As is usual with such issues, neither great political party welcomed its appearance or knew what to do about it. New York City sentiment was, on the whole, anti-Ally. The Irish and the Germans between them insured that there should not be any landslide of sentiment against the Central Powers. Italy's entry into the war on the Allied side in 1915 had placed the Italian-Americans in a particularly embarrassing mood. It was natural for them to sympathize with their native country but, for a large number of them, it meant a choice between returning to military service or being posted as deserters. Pre-Fascist Italians had a keen distaste for regimentation, especially in its more painful forms, and so LaGuardia's constituents were far from conspicuous in their practical support of the Allied cause.

The Allied cause had, at the same time, become the dominant force in American public life. Our initial sympathy for the "democratic" governments of France and England in resisting "Prussian militarism", as well as our institutional and cultural heritage from Western Europe, had predisposed the American Government to an emotional approval of an Allied victory, which Allied propagandists insisted was at hand. The Germans, and their Irish sympathizers, being in the minority, had further offended American sentiment by their efforts to redress the propagandist balance. The German U-Boats, and in particular the sinking of the "Lusitania", had represented both a menace to American interests and an injury to American "rights", for the British blockade had converted North America into an economic base for the prosecution of the Anglo-

French war against Germany. The powerful financial and industrial groups which dominated the Republican Party were heartily in favor of an Allied victory at all costs. The Mid-Western farmers — and to a lesser extent the Southerners — were in favor of keeping out of the war at all costs. So the same campaign which carried LaGuardia to Congress and Wilson back to the White House was a confused affair, in which Wilson boasted of his success in keeping out of hostilities while Hughes, the Republican candidate for the Presidency, was at pains to point out that the G.O.P. was not a War Party. Only Theodore Roosevelt, of all Republican politicians, had spoken boldly in favor of American intervention and he was already dreaming of reproducing his famous "Rough-Riders" on the Western Front.

Since neither Germany nor the Allies were conducting the war for the benefit of American politicians, the course of events made continued neutrality impossible. Unlimited submarine warfare was resumed and the "Zimmermann Note" revealed a German intention to build a German-Mexican-Japanese alliance against the United States, if the American Government entered the ranks of the Allies. LaGuardia's diary for February 1, 1917, contained a pertinent entry: "The question of the submarine in my opinion is one which should not be hastily decided. I believe the time will come when this country will have to rely for the protection of its coasts on submarine and aerial defense." This may have been true but it was not popular, since both official and public opinion were united in condemning the only weapons which offered the Central Powers a reasonable chance of victory. Later studies were to verify the fact that what we really feared was a German victory and that we would have entered the war to prevent such a victory, even if the U-Boats had behaved themselves according to President Wilson's curious ideas of international law.

In the meantime, the opponents of the war hysteria which

was sweeping the Administration had taken the fatal step of a filibuster against the Armed Merchantman Bill, by which President Wilson hoped to confine our intervention to an armed neutrality. The filibuster defeated the Bill but also prevented passage of the annual supply bills. This automatically forced the President to call an extra session of the newly elected Congress, with the Republicans in control of the House, which reflected the growing belligerency of our public opinion.

LaGuardia had prepared for the inevitable by promising his constituents that he would not vote for war, unless he himself enlisted — a pledge which, with nine out of ten politicians, would have been a guarantee of pacifism, if kept. LaGuardia was not then a pacifist. The whole world was in a ferment. Russia had deposed the Tsar and for the first time since the War began it was possible to state somewhat truthfully that the Allies represented democratic self-government and the Central Powers military autocracy. In the House, the “freshman” from the 14th New York District found himself at the feet of Jim Mann, the wise old Illinois Congressman who was to be chosen as Speaker. Other men he admired and was later to know included the elder LaFollette and Senator Lenroot, but he had little opportunity to make their acquaintance during the stormy weeks which followed his introduction to Congressional life.

Wilson's War Message led to the passage of the Joint Resolution of April 6, 1917, by which the United States declared that a state of war existed between it and the German Empire. LaGuardia voted for this resolution, after an attempt to ascertain whether his constituents were in favor of it: it was his last recognizable act of party regularity. LaFollette, Norris and the Western Progressives were against war, as were a handful of Congressmen, but the mighty “T.R.” was hot for blood and the Rough Rider spirit was aflame. LaGuardia voted for war. He

later kept his pledge and enlisted, one of the four Congressmen who backed up their decision to support war with a willingness to risk their own lives.

LaGuardia also voted for the Selective Service Act, the astutely named measure by which a young staff lieutenant named Hugh S. Johnson strove to make conscription palatable to the American people. LaGuardia urged, in memory of the "embalmed beef" which had cost his father's life in the last spasm of American patriotism, that the death-sentence be imposed on war profiteers found guilty of selling fraudulent supplies to the government. He unsuccessfully opposed the censorship provisions of the Selective Service Act and successfully insisted that the personnel of the Food Administration be recruited on the basis of Civil Service qualifications. He opposed passage of the Act which permitted foreign co-belligerents to recruit their nationals domiciled in the United States. He argued that it was an insult to the Italians in this country and asserted that 75,000 Italians had already volunteered for service in Italy — a figure which the White House promptly denied. LaGuardia was already running into the realization that war is the most intense of all political processes and that in time of national emergency patriotism is the excuse offered for doing what needs to be done. Left to themselves, the American people might have raised a volunteer army of between 500,000 and a million, but our heart was not in the war and the only way in which we could have recruited the vast numbers required by the dangerous situation on the Western Front was through conscription. It also followed that the American Government, which was conscripting its own citizens, would have little sympathy with aliens of Allied origin who would neither return to their own country to fight nor enlist in the American forces.

Fiorello decided to join the Air Service. He persuaded Tony Bellanca to give him flying lessons out at Mineola. Those were the days when people had a not unfounded prejudice against

aviators as reckless and inconsiderate people; so the aviation course LaGuardia received was almost clandestine. He learned quickly enough, although he never became a good flyer, and, in August, 1917, he left with a squadron of cadets for the Italian front, with the rank of a Captain in the Army Air Service. Pro-Germans tried to declare that he had forfeited his seat in Congress by accepting two Federal salaries, but when it was announced that his salary as a Representative had been discontinued on his enlistment, the seat was held vacant for him by Congressional resolution.

Before leaving Washington he made several interesting arrangements. One was with G-2, the Military Intelligence Section of the General Staff. Another was with Mr. Wilbur J. Carr, Director of the Consular Service in the State Department. LaGuardia asked Carr if he could do anything in Italy for the State Department (his G-2 connections suggesting the advisability of liaison with the diplomatic agencies of the Government), and Carr replied, "Good Heavens! Tell us, rather, what we can do for you!" So LaGuardia requested that if any prisoners of war were picked up from his old Consular district at Trieste and Fiume, he should be put in touch with them. Finally, he saw his sweetheart, Thea Almerigotti, and promised her that he wouldn't return from the war without liberating her birthplace: Trieste.

He sailed from Halifax with a group of air cadets, under the command of Major John E. Hunt, an old Army man who refused to allow the cadets above decks. Captain LaGuardia said that the cadets were student officers and should not be treated as enlisted men, and that if they were not allowed on deck he would go below. He won his point — a small one but one which illustrates the inability of the old Army to adjust itself to democracy and LaGuardia's instinct for a political occasion. Three years later, when Hunt was held responsible for the escape of the notorious draft-dodger, Grover Cleveland Berg-

doll, LaGuardia came to his defense and prevented a move in Congress to court martial the old martinet as a scape-goat for public hostility to "slackers".

The LaGuardia unit was landed in England, collared by the prudent British and kept there. In the meantime, the Italian Army and people had become progressively weary of the war. Small gains at frightful expense, military incompetence, a difficult terrain, and the knowledge that the country had been forced into the war by Allied pressure, combined to create a mood of deep despondency. The Austro-Germans waited till this mood was ripe and then struck — at Caporetto. The result was the greatest single military disaster suffered by the Allies in the West. The French and British rushed reinforcements and a new aviation unit was hastily assembled under LaGuardia and rushed to Foggia, his father's birthplace, on the west coast of the Adriatic.

The Italian Army finally dug in but Italian public opinion blamed the Allies for their defeat. It was freely asserted that the United States was interested only in saving its war-loans and that the American Army was worthless. Energetic propaganda was required if we were to make the Italians realize the power and the disinterested idealism which Wilson had placed at the disposal of the Anglo-French Alliance. The American Embassy was deeply concerned.

The Embassy was then under old Thomas Nelson Page, the distinguished Virginia novelist, who was known to his staff as "St. Thomas of Shenandoah" and who was ably supported by the more worldly Peter Jay and the dapper Colonel Buckey, his military attaché. Buckey, after years of peacetime heckling by Congressional Committees, was only too delighted to find that he had a real live Congressman under his orders, and proceeded to make the most of his opportunity. Captain LaGuardia was ordered to fill the breach. Ambassador Page broke the news to him suavely, with the almost lethal kindli-

ness of an old-style Democratic politician. LaGuardia was to address a patriotic pep-meeting in Genoa, and convince the Genoese of America's sympathy with the Italian cause. If his speech were a failure, Page explained, the Embassy would promptly disavow him. If it succeeded, the Embassy would equally promptly state that Captain LaGuardia expressed the sentiments of the American Government.

The first opportunity came at the Genoa Bourse, on a Sunday. LaGuardia did well, so well that he was invited to address another meeting at the Scala in Milan. There he succeeded in arousing such enthusiasm, with his demand for the Trentino, Trieste and Fiume for Italy, that he became a major force in Italian public opinion. He spoke at Turin, he spoke at Rome, he spoke at Naples. His greatest bitterness came when the hard-hearted Buckey refused to grant him two days leave to enjoy the Parthenopean beauties of Naples and ordered him back immediately to Foggia. The war had slowed to a stalemate on the West, where the Germans were preparing for their great March 1918 offensive, and the Italians had checked the invaders at the Piave. American men, American money, American materials were rolling into Italy and Italian morale was rising again. The Embassy staff had been strengthened for propaganda purposes by Professor Charles E. Merriam, of Chicago, on the Creel Committee of Public Information, and by the late Gino Speranza, an expert political reporter who served as range-finder for Merriam's propagandist barrage. Things were clicking in Italy.

Among the aviation cadets whom LaGuardia had shepherded across the Atlantic and down to Foggia was Albert Spalding, the violinist. As soon as Spalding got his lieutenancy he applied to be relieved of ground duty but LaGuardia refused to allow him to fly. The Congressman-Captain took the position that a good violinist ranked as a sort of "public monument" and should not be risked. Until LaGuardia went to the

front, Spalding had to remain a despised "kiwi" and when he finally got permission from the new commander to take flying lessons he received a furious protest from his friend at the front, asking whether he had gone stark, staring mad!

The Captain and the Fiddler made a very congenial team and when LaGuardia was appointed representative for Italy on the Joint Army and Navy Aircraft Board, he made Spalding his adjutant. At that time, as a result of the scandalous failure of the American aircraft program, the Army had placed contracts for the manufacture of planes for the A.E.F. with Fiat, Ansaldo and other Italian factories, under agreement that we should supply raw materials. But France and England took first whack at everything which escaped the U-Boats and in April, 1918, the Italians, having failed to receive deliveries, were falling behind their schedule. LaGuardia figured that he could buy in Barcelona special steel, copper and ashwood for propellers, at a great saving in time and in shipping risk. The only trouble was that Spain, under German pressure, had declared an embargo against just such articles. But LaGuardia claimed that if we couldn't buy them openly we could certainly smuggle them out of Spain.

So General Foulois ordered LaGuardia and Spalding to come to Paris to discuss the proposal with his assistant, Colonel Dunwoodie, who became enthusiastic and ordered them to carry out the scheme to the best of their ability. They were to travel as civilians, with passports and letters of credit, under special orders from G.H.Q. authorized by Pershing himself. The only catch was that, under the inimitable West Point system of Army red tape, it would take from ten days to two weeks to get the orders through in proper form. Time was precious, the big German drive was still raging, and LaGuardia wangled from Col. Dawes an order to go to Spain anyhow.

He got the passports from the Embassy and the blueprints and letters of credit from Col. Charles Gates Dawes, the Army

General Purchasing Agent. Spalding was told to get the tickets and army orders to enter Spain within twenty-four hours. When he objected that it would take a week or ten days to get orders from Chaumont, LaGuardia roared: "I don't care whether they're Chaumont orders or not! Get any kind of order that will get us across the frontier!"

The Fiddler got the idea. He went back to his hotel-room, forged the orders on his own typewriter, covered them with every kind of stamp and seal he could find, including a red-ink legend, "SECRET!", put on the most disreputable civilian suit he could find and took the elegant "dago-dazzler" around to Military Police Headquarters on the Rue Sainte Anne. The desk sergeant was somewhat staggered by the dazzling document and began to show curiosity of a sort which might have landed both LaGuardia and Spalding in a military prison; so the latter leaned across the desk and remarked, in a low but terribly official voice: "Read what's written here and keep your mouth shut if you know what's good for you!" The trick worked, the travel-orders were stamped "Valid", and the two adventurers caught their train.

They found themselves in Barcelona, early in May, with unlimited funds, a good knowledge of Italian and no Spanish to speak of. The city was swarming with spies, German refugees and secret agents, but LaGuardia believed in direct action. He told Spalding that he proposed to begin by finding the steamship company which had suffered the heaviest losses from German submarines during the last two years, on the theory that such a concern would be ardently pro-Ally. The Taja Line seemed to answer the description and within ten days LaGuardia and Spalding had procured \$1,500,000 worth of raw materials for military aircraft from Barcelona to Genoa. Their job done, they reported to the Embassy at Madrid, sent a report to Chaumont by diplomatic pouch, and returned to Italy — having punctured the Spanish embargo and saved

the Army aircraft program in Italy. A neat job all around!

On his return to Italy, LaGuardia found a new opportunity awaiting him. Wilbur Carr had remembered to put him in touch with prisoners of war hailing from his old Fiume district. One such, a former Hungarian Senator of Italian race, wrote LaGuardia and offered him the opportunity to start a revolution in Hungary. Count Michael Karolyi and the Society of 1848, founded to commemorate Louis Kossuth's bid for Magyar independence, were reported to be ready to act. The Hungarians were war-weary and they further were convinced that the Austrians and Germans were deliberately using the Magyar troops as cannon-fodder. The old traditions of the revolution of 1848 were still alive, and the proposal was that Karolyi should meet LaGuardia in Switzerland. LaGuardia promptly checked with the Italian secret police and convinced himself that his correspondent was reliable; so he arranged an interview and pledged that the American Government would supply whatever money and supplies were needed for the purpose of a revolution which would take Hungary out of the war.

In an ill-advised moment, he informed Colonel Buckey of his plan. The military attaché informed Ambassador Page, and Thomas Nelson Page cabled the State Department, giving names, places, chapter and verse, on the Karolyi proposal. Robert Lansing was then Secretary of State and the idea of starting a revolution in your enemy's territory shocked his legalistic mind. He wired Page, ordering LaGuardia to cease and desist from his iniquitous scheme to shorten the war by direct action against the foe's political base.

LaGuardia foolishly decided to obey orders, although it was then early 1918 and the Allies were being pushed to the wall by Ludendorff's titanic drive toward the Marne. Any diversion would have been valuable, but the Captain obeyed orders and went back to his aviation unit. On his next trip to Chaumont, he told Dennis Nolan, Chief of G-2, what had happened.

Nolan was furious, told LaGuardia that he was in the Army now and had no business taking orders from any mere Ambassador. He *ordered* LaGuardia to go to Switzerland immediately and start that blank-blanked Magyar revolution. Money, said Nolan, was no object.

It was too late. Whether through a leak at Chaumont or through the German success in cracking the American diplomatic codes, the Vienna Government moved quickly. Karolyi was interned for the duration of the war and the Society of 1848 was officially disbanded. The game was up. Hungary had her revolution six months later, but it was six months too late, thanks to Mr. Page and Mr. Lansing and their naïve ignorance of Central European history and the way to win a war.

LaGuardia returned to the Italian front and completed his military experience — which had included public speaking, contraband-running in Spain and intrigues against the political integrity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire — by flying the big Caproni bombers in night-raids over the Dolomites. It was dangerous work, because by this time the Committee on Public Information had become impressed with the successful use of propaganda in Russia and believed that much could be accomplished by raining pamphlets over the Austrian lines. LaGuardia was given bundles of stale printed exhortations fixed so that the cord would break after they had fallen a certain distance and thus release a snow-storm of printed paper behind the trenches. The Austrians heartily disapproved of this idea and sent word that any aviators caught in this activity would not be treated as prisoners of war, but as spies. So in addition to the searchlights and anti-aircraft and peaks and enemy aircraft, the aviators thus employed faced a firing-squad if they made a forced landing. Naturally, they were scared to death, as most brave men are in war, but went ahead with their assigned duties just the same. Fiorello had enlisted to fight and he risked his life at the front, when many of the post-war

veterans who made political history by their demands for a bonus were doing squads right in American cantonments or wistfully shouting "When do we eat?" at the drenched fields far behind the lines in France.

By early fall, it was evident that the Germans were on the run and that the war was coming to a victorious close. Politics and the needs of saving the 14th New York District, as well as the world, became important once more. There was a rising sentiment in America against the war, an unrest which was linked psychologically if not politically with the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, which was causing much uneasiness. It was felt that something must be done to combat it. The Socialists had nominated Scott Nearing to run for Congress in LaGuardia's District and LaGuardia had been nominated, in his absence, by both the Republican and Democratic organizations. He returned from the war as a hero in khaki and prepared to vindicate himself with the war-weary masses of Greenwich Village voters.

III

The New York political picture had been profoundly altered by the pressure of the War. War profits had already ended the need for municipal economy which had given the City a Fusion Administration and by 1917, Mayor Mitchel was doomed. He had been defeated in the Republican primaries of that year by William M. Bennett, who was himself a push-over for Judge John Hylan of Brooklyn, the Tammany-endorsed Democratic candidate for Mayor. The movement which was to send Alfred E. Smith, the Tammany President of the Board of Aldermen, to the Governor's Mansion in Albany on January 1, 1919, was already ripening.

To an astute politician that could mean only one thing. The American people were dissatisfied with the national administration and with affairs in general. The truth was slowly

emerging that this Wilsonian war to make the world safe for democracy was profoundly unpopular. National spirit was strong and Americans were willing to play the hand which had been dealt them without complaint, but they wanted another hand. The compulsory draft, the Espionage Act, the heatless, wheatless, meatless days and all the regimentation of war-time, combined with the fact that for us the World War was at best a preventive war and not a war for national survival, all produced a growing restiveness. Wilson had called for a Democratic Congress to support him and was destined to be disappointed. For the Republicans not only retained the control of the House of Representatives which the 1916 elections had given them, but the election of Senator Newberry of Michigan (later unseated for illegal expenditures in the campaign) gave the G.O.P. a margin of one vote with which to organize the Senate. The trend of the election returns clearly indicated the coming disavowal of Wilson's peace settlement by the Senate and of his whole Administration by the people in 1920. It is dangerous to ignore the election-returns in a democracy.

LaGuardia had received leave to return for the election. The National Security League was deeply worried over the rise of Socialism and had secured for the war-hero the nomination of both Parties in order to defeat Scott Nearing, the Socialist candidate, in the Fourteenth District. Nearing was a conscientious objector who had been imprisoned under the Espionage Act and it speaks volumes for the unpopularity of the Wilson war that he should have been considered a dangerous contender.

The fact is that the Republicans were worried and sent out a political duenna to meet LaGuardia's ship at Quarantine in order to coach him. The Little Flower's reputation for injudicious utterances led them to believe it wise not to let him see the ship news reporters until he knew what he intended to say to them. LaGuardia was discovered in the lavatory and the political emissary firmly blockaded the door and refused to let

him out until he knew what LaGuardia intended to say about his opponent. "How can I say anything about him when I don't know anything about him?" demanded LaGuardia. "What regiment was he in?" The duenna whooped with delight. "That will do!" he said — and it did.

The answer was a knock-out and Fiorello was assured that that was all he had to say to win the election in a walk. So LaGuardia returned to take part in a fantastic "khaki election", the effect of which was to defend the war against Socialist criticism and to repudiate Wilson for having brought us into it. LaGuardia and Nearing held a public debate on the merits of Socialism and LaGuardia argued that while Nearing had been urging the theoretical advantages of Socialism, he — LaGuardia — had been fighting international plutocracy to achieve them. LaGuardia won easily but the election returns may well have given him food for thought. Despite the unpopularity of Socialism — an unpopularity which was later to find expression in the expulsion of Socialist Assemblymen from the New York State Legislature and in fifteen years of political red-baiting for the greater glory of Mr. Hamilton Fish, Jr., Nearing got more votes than LaGuardia had received in 1914. The final count was: LaGuardia, 14,500, and Nearing, 6,200, in the largest turn-out of voters the District had ever seen. So Fiorello resigned his commission in the U.S. Army, retaining the still useful rank of Major, and returned to the seat in Congress which had been kept waiting for him.

The War was over and the Trentino, Trieste and Fiume were Italian. LaGuardia had kept his personal "campaign promise" to Miss Thea Almerigotti of Trieste that he would come back with her home town as a wedding present. They were married in March 1919. Fate was to give them two and a half years of happiness, ending in personal tragedy so shattering that for Fiorello all the lights of all the world went out for a time.

The War was over and the American people hadn't much

liked it anyhow, but the military leaders of the nation seemed not to realize either of these two important facts. Partly to strengthen his hand in the diplomatic bargaining at Paris and partly to prevent his cherished League of Nations from becoming an adjunct of British sea-power and the French General staff, Wilson called for a huge naval building program and a standing army of over 500,000 men. Navy building went ahead but the A.E.F. had relieved most Americans of their illusions about military glory. LaGuardia entered the fight which blocked the Big Army Bill. The war-hero had turned pacifist, the man who had planned a social revolution in Hungary was prepared to work for a major political reversal in America.

The Wilson Administration seemed to have lost its senses. The Democratic Attorney-General, Mr. A. Mitchell Palmer of Pennsylvania, launched a major Red-Scare, culminating in deportation of alien radicals to Soviet Russia. A great steel strike flared in the Mid-West and it was broken by company thugs, special deputies, extra police, militia, vigilantes and the usual dreary panoply of law-and-order enlisted in the service of profits. Taxes were high, living costs were high, the Food Administration under Mr. Herbert Hoover continued to exasperate both farmers, processors and consumers in order to ship to Europe the cheap food with which to combat general anarchy and the spread of Bolshevism. Mr. Wilson himself, who had begun as a great prophet of the virtues of democracy, refused to follow the election returns and tried to force the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles through a Senate which accurately reflected American war-weariness and impatience with the idea that the United States had any continuing responsibility for European affairs. Balked in the Senate, Wilson began a public speaking tour which ended with his physical collapse. With him, the heart went out of his Administration and the stage was set for a return to "normalcy" under the Republican Party.

With the Democrats ebbing at Washington and returning to power in New York, it seemed risky for LaGuardia, who was a Republican though an unpredictable one, to enter City politics. He had never run for a City office and the tide was against him. On the other hand, he held a safe seat in Congress and if defeated in the City need fear no serious interruption to his political career. When Al Smith went to Albany on January 1, 1919, for the first of his four terms as Governor of New York State, he had resigned the office of President of the Board of Alderman. In the fall of 1919, the Republicans persuaded LaGuardia to run for Smith's unexpired term.

It was a forlorn hope and LaGuardia undertook it with the assurance that, if victorious, the Republicans would nominate him for Mayor in 1921. The campaign was closely fought and of interest chiefly because LaGuardia refused to make any political capital out of his own war-service. This was a shrewd move, even though a sincere one, as it directly reflected the increasing American mood of disillusion and distaste for the "Great Adventure" of 1917. He said: "I can think of nothing more unjust, no more dangerous move in American politics. This was a great war of peoples. It was not a soldiers' war. What soldiers did was only part of the effort required. Is the man who made shells to be penalized because his duty was not in the trenches? We do not perpetuate a military caste for political purposes. Because I believe this so strongly I refused to accept an office in the American Legion. When the matter of the Legion came up in Congress I insisted on such a form of organization as would keep it out of politics!"

The Little Flower defeated William M. Bennett, the man who had beaten John Purroy Mitchel in 1917, in the Republican primaries, which were characterized by more than usual bitterness on the part of the defeated candidate, and by the usual amount of fraud and violence. Sam Koenig, the Republican County Chairman who had picked LaGuardia for the

race, left little to chance. Fiorello's Democratic opponent, Moran, was ill, and the result was the first Republican victory in a city-wide election since the days of Fusion in 1913. LaGuardia won by 1,530 votes, while Henry Curran won the office of Borough President of Manhattan by a 6,000 vote margin. The only Democratic victory was the selection of James A. Foley as Surrogate. The Little Flower had made the grade, but it was only a technical triumph, for an Irish war-veteran named Michael A. Kelly ran for the same job on a Liberty ticket, and drew so many Irish votes that he threw the election to LaGuardia. Mr. Koenig left very few things to chance.

After eight years of effort, the Little Flower had won political power in his adopted city, and he was headed for the Mayorship. At least so it seemed. The post-war reaction was now in full flood. While the Republicans were nationally accusing Wilson of violating sacred American liberties, the Albany Republicans, headed by Senator Lusk, had suspended the five Socialist Assemblymen on charges of treason. This was too much for LaGuardia. He said that if they were guilty of treason, "they should be indicted, convicted and shot. If not, they should be immediately reelected." The Mitchell red raids were now in full blast and the U.S.S. "Beaufort" had already sailed for Russia with a transport-load of "radicals". Before the year was out a bomb was to be exploded in front of J. P. Morgan & Co.'s Wall Street offices. Just as it began to appear that it had been incautious to train so many Americans in the gentle art of homicide, the Eighteenth Amendment came into force, to add to the injustices and complexities of political democracy.

LaGuardia had to pick his side — and do so quickly — if he was to avoid the sort of a record his Republican backers expected of him. It is significant that as early as February, 1920, he explained why there was such a howl against "Bolshevism". "It is used by the sweatshop owner when he speaks of his men

demanding a living wage," he wrote. "It is howled by the profiteer. It is ranted forth by rotten political leaders." He went on to show that the demand for high wages was reasonable, that the amount needed was relatively minute, and that the reactionary employers who demanded "law and order" denied "law and order" to those of whom they complained as Bolsheviks.

He was a great disappointment to the Republicans in New York. At the time, the great issue was Transit and the five-cent fare. New York City had built and paid for the subways which were operated under contract by the transit companies which owned the surface and elevated lines. The companies desired subway fare increases which would cover their losses on their own property. Mayor Hylan was a thoroughly honest, rather stupid, blundering man who grasped the essence of the transit situation for political purposes. Almost the only daily interest common to the great mass of New Yorkers was the subway, and the five-cent fare was a symbol of living costs, property values, living conditions, income and convenience around which they all could rally.

A rather extraordinary situation promptly developed in the Board of Estimate, where LaGuardia attacked Comptroller Craig with such vituperation that the latter branded it as "blackguardia" and on one occasion called him a "little Wop". There were threats of fist-fights, impassioned pleas to Hylan to use his gavel on Fiorello's head — the creation of a LaGuardia "nuisance-value" so immense that even today the whole episode appears incredible. But the realities of the situation, as plaintively pointed out by the conservatives, were that LaGuardia was in alliance with Hearst and Hylan to keep C. F. Murphy from controlling the City Hall and to maintain the five-cent subway fare. After Fiorello had left the City Hall he was to tell an audience that Mayor Hylan "has a big heart and is thoroughly honest". Two years later he was to go to the

rescue of his old enemy Craig, as he went to the rescue of Mayor Hylan, when Craig was threatened with jail on a charge of contempt of court because he had criticized a judicial decision in a letter to a fellow-official.

For two years, Craig and LaGuardia made light and lurid reading matter for the metropolitan newspaper subscribers, but it was not a very good build-up for a man who wanted to make himself Mayor. The Little Flower had been demanding such beautiful but unpopular measures as reform of the antiquated and cumbersome city machinery, urging a new charter and pointing out that "The Board of Estimate is not government according to Hoyle, but according to the rules of the Marquis of Queensbury." He demanded an end to corruption; he called for reorganization and the discharge of useless employees — all of them measures calculated to alarm office-holders and to cool the enthusiasm of their prospective heirs.

The 1921 Republican nomination for Mayor went to Henry Curran, the Borough President of Manhattan. After vague threats of an independent ticket and other sources of embarrassment, the Little Flower calmed down and agreed to support the ticket after Curran beat him in the Party primary. The result was a beautiful illustration of the workings of public opinion in American democracy. It was prophetic of many events to come. Hylan was a candidate to succeed himself but by November 1921 not even Hearst was in favor of "Honest John" or "Red Mike" (depending on your politics) Hylan. Every metropolitan newspaper was against him and Curran, the Republican candidate, was an accomplished, genial, presentable fellow. Yet Hylan won by the largest majority which had ever been recorded in a New York City election. All that LaGuardia salvaged out of the wreck was an understanding that he might get the Republican nomination for Congress in the 20th New York District — a district of Italians, Puerto Ricans and Negroes on the upper east side of Man-

hattan. His old 14th had been inherited by another Republican who had won a special race to fill LaGuardia's unexpired term and been regularly reelected in 1920.

It is difficult for many of LaGuardia's admirers to take much pride in this whole episode. It ranged him too closely on the wrong, as well as on the losing, side of New York politics, for all his verbal pyrotechnics in the Board of Estimate to redeem. In fact, his quarrel with Comptroller Craig did more to fix him in the public mind as an excitable "little Wop" than anything else in his long career of public service. He seemed irrational and irritable beyond the bounds of responsible politics.

On the political side, he was in the wrong boat. The cycle of reform which had begun in 1912 had come to an end. Warren G. Harding and the Republicans had regained overwhelming control of the Federal Government — in both Houses of Congress, at the White House and on the Supreme Court bench. Their control was not to be assailed for ten years. In New York City, Tammany was back in full control. The reelection of Hylan in 1921 was companion to the Harding landslide of 1920 and Tammany's control at the City Hall was not to be challenged until Jimmy Walker abdicated in 1932. The Republican "Tammany" was in power at Washington, the Democratic "Tammany" in Manhattan. It was as though Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson had never existed, almost as though there had never been a World War. In the circumstances Washington was the only place for a Republican, and to Washington LaGuardia was eventually to go.

When he went, however, it was as a Republican irregular. The ten years through which he — and the world — had just passed had taught him the fine art of foot-work in following political trends and the folly of committing himself to organizations. He has never been a good machine-man, either as a leader or subordinate, and was to discover, in politics as in

other careers, "that he travels fastest who travels alone". In his own case, there was grim irony in this discovery, for by the end of 1921 he was very much alone.

The explanation of this particular period of erratic and futile electioneering lies in the personal tragedy of LaGuardia's life. On his return from the war he had married Thea Almerigotti. They had a child, a daughter whom they named Fioretta Thea, born in 1920. When she was a year old, the baby died of spinal meningitis at Roosevelt Hospital, after a long illness. LaGuardia's wife suffered a breakdown as the result of caring for the child and died herself in November 1921, after a long and heart-rending illness. It is easy to understand why LaGuardia was so unaccountable and irresponsible in his public life, while his private happiness was slowly being destroyed under his very eyes.

His wife's death was the final blow. There was a period when his friends despaired of him. He drank heavily and was in danger of becoming a complete bum. He served out his term at City Hall until December 31, 1921, and then resigned himself to despair. His work was done and had turned to dust. After ten years of lifting himself by his boot-straps he was without ambition, except to forget. ✓

3. THE MAKING OF A PROGRESSIVE

I

THE test of character is how a man meets disaster. By 1922, LaGuardia was a failure. He had lost out in politics, he had lost his wife and his child, he had lost hope. For a while, his destiny hung in the balance.

It was at this point that his career resumed its early parallel with that of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. A year before Thea LaGuardia died, the young patrician of Dutchess County had also received a crushing blow. While LaGuardia was fighting his way as a political lawyer specializing in immigrant cases, young Roosevelt had been defying the Tammany bosses at Albany and at the Baltimore Convention which nominated Woodrow Wilson. While LaGuardia was battling in the 14th District, young Roosevelt had been the social light of the first Wilson Administration, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. While LaGuardia was speaking and flying and doing odd jobs for Dennis Nolan and G-2, young Roosevelt had been promoting the North Sea barrage of mines, visiting the Western Front, and vainly urging the Italian Government to undertake a naval offensive in the Adriatic. While LaGuardia was bickering with Comptroller Craig in the New York City Board of Estimate and working for the Republican nomination for Mayor, young Roosevelt had received the Democratic nomination for the Vice-Presidency of the United States and had barnstormed the country with Jimmy Cox. The crushing Harding landslide which buried the Democrats in 1920 had been followed in Roosevelt's case by an attack of

infantile paralysis which seemed finally to have removed him from public life. Then Roosevelt began the long slow battle for recovery which was to bring him back into national Democratic politics and make him eligible for the Governorship of New York in 1928. LaGuardia was to pass through much the same resurrection after a similar political disappointment and private disaster. In 1922 he drank the waters of that bitterness which only the strong can drink and live.

The political amenities forbade him to return to his old District, but the 20th was available. It extended — roughly — from Fifth Avenue to the East River, from 99th Street to 118th Street. Despite its frontage on the luxury avenue of the world's most luxurious city, it was one of the most poverty stricken regions in New York. Its population consisted principally of Italians, Puerto Ricans and Negroes, with a scattering of Jews, Irish and Germans. It was promising ground for a Republican candidate, of well-advertised Italian ancestry and with a national reputation. Perhaps, too, Tammany was not unwilling to get LaGuardia out of city politics, for LaGuardia had been an ally of Hylan; and Hylan, backed by Hearst, was keeping the politicians at "the Hall" out of that lush control of the city which was to come with Jimmy Walker four years later.

Beginning with July, 1922, Hearst gave LaGuardia space in the *New York Evening Journal* and the *New York American* for a series of some fifty articles, presenting Fiorello's views on city, state, national and foreign affairs, and building him up as an institution. Some understanding had been reached, by which the Hearst-backed Dr. Royal S. Copeland was the Democratic nominee for United States Senator, and subsequent history suggests that Tammany was willing to let Hearst have his men in Congress if Hearst would let Tammany get their man into the City Hall. Whatever the arrangement, the Hearst papers supported the LaGuardia candidacy and helped him as a national figure.

LaGuardia took as his text Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party Platform for 1912 and attempted to apply its principles to state and national affairs. This idea was to occur to Franklin Delano Roosevelt some ten years later. In fact, both Fiorello and Franklin were destined to apply the Progressive principles adopted by the great "T.R." in their political careers — a fact which is amusing in light of the many charges of "Fascism" and "Communism" which have been levelled against them. For the one thing which characterizes American progressivism is its lack of systematic doctrine and its preference for practical action over any amount of liberal theorizing.

LaGuardia's subsequent Congressional career can be traced directly to the document of 1912, which he codified as early as 1922 in a pamphlet entitled *Proposed Planks for the Republican State Platform, 1922*. He, as many American liberals were destined to do much later, also went back to the platforms of the Republican Party of May, 1860, and of June 1864, as well as to the Declaration of Principles of the Progressive Party of August 1912, in an effort to discover and reaffirm that lusty strain of native radicalism which had given birth to the Republican Party and which he hoped would redeem it from the judicial and industrial oligarchy which controlled it.

He won his election, by a narrow margin. He received 8,500 votes to his Tammany opponent's 8,325, with two other candidates in the field. He had just turned forty years when he returned to Congress, after a twelve-month which had carried him to the depths and which had witnessed three great world events — in Turkey, Italy and Germany — which were profoundly to influence his subsequent career.

At the time, as is not always the case, they had excited worldwide attention. The Republicans, on their return to complete power at Washington, had completed the withdrawal

of America from the European balance of power, by burying the proposal to enter the League of Nations and by signing a separate Treaty of Peace with Germany. They had followed this by negotiating a baffling series of treaties at Washington, limiting our naval armaments and regulating the affairs of the Pacific and the Far East on the basis of the *status quo*. Once America's decision was understood, events unrolled themselves rapidly.

In Turkey, a general named Mustafa Kemal defeated the British-equipped Greek Army which had invaded Anatolia and, by a display of strength, forced the British to evacuate Constantinople and surrender the Dardanelles, control of which was among the most prized rewards of British victory. These events excited great interest in America, principally because of our sentimental concern with the Armenians, Greeks and Jews of the Ottoman Empire, whose rescue from the Turks had been one of the purposes of the war. The importance of Kemal's victory lay in the fact that it was the first demonstration of a beaten nation's ability to revise an oppressive treaty by an appeal to force of arms. While LaGuardia was campaigning among the Italians and Puerto Ricans of the upper East Side, the precedent was established which was to lead to a German national resurrection ten years later.

Shortly after the Turkish success, a former Socialist editor who had been serving in the Italian trenches when LaGuardia was "packing them in the aisles" in his Italian speaking-tour, led a semi-military political party of ex-service men and discontented youngsters to whom the post-war world offered no opportunity, in a March on Rome. Benito Mussolini had invented Fascism as a means for securing a place in the sun for an Italy which had fought on the winning side but had been treated almost like one of the vanquished. A new form of political organization, based on the experiences of Lenin's Communist Party in Russia, had been introduced into Western

civilization as a means of winning bread for the underprivileged nations. While LaGuardia, in victorious and invulnerable America, was preaching disarmament and progressive reform, Mussolini was preaching organized militarism, authority and action in poverty-stricken Italy. Just as Kemal had pointed the way to external readjustment of national injustice, so had Mussolini discovered the way to an internal readjustment of revolutionary scope but without the usual revolutionary anarchy.

And in the closing days of 1922, and while LaGuardia was waiting for the 4th of March of 1923 to put him again on the Federal payroll, the French Government became angered by Germany's inability or unwillingness to pay the immense sums demanded by the victors as reparation for war damage. The French authorities felt that America's defection had cheated France of the fruits of victory and took the fatal step of sending French troops into the Ruhr. As a result, the Germans began an orgy of banknote inflation which brought all Central Europe close to complete economic and political chaos. With British support, the American bankers resumed our intervention in Europe. The Dawes Plan was established, under which American investors loaned money to Germany and the Germans paid reparations with the proceeds. The net effect was to finance the export of American food-stuffs and manufactured goods for nearly a decade and thereby to create a financial and industrial boom, with pyramiding profits, which led fatally to the collapse of 1929. The effect was even more serious, for the inflation in Germany embittered the German veterans, middle-classes, and youngsters deprived of opportunity. A group of political adventurers in Munich, led by General Ludendorff and a young Austrian house-painter named Adolf Hitler, took the Mussolini model and began the slow, hard struggle to organize a semi-military party of discontent, which they named National Socialism.

Where Kemal had only foreign foes to face and Mussolini only domestic opposition, Hitler faced the punitive provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, the domestic Catholic and Socialist politicians who controlled the Weimar Republic (the creation of which had been one of the achievements of Wilsonian diplomacy), and an international banking control which invaded every profitable channel of German activity. The eventual result was to be known as Hitlerism and it was to react, like an inexorable destiny, on the political fortunes of the newly elected little Republican Member of Congress from the Twentieth New York District.

At the moment, LaGuardia, like most of his fellow-countrymen, was secure in the belief that all "the European mess" was far away and impotent to affect a nation which had just decided to rid itself of "entangling alliances" and to attend to its own oddly disorganized affairs.

In this decision, the country was encouraged by the disquieting developments in Russia. Early in 1917, the Social Democrats had deposed the Tsar and had pressed forward, under the brief leadership of Kerensky, for a gratifying democratic war against "Prussian Militarism". In November, however, the Kerensky Government fell and was replaced by a communistic revolutionary group, headed by Lenin and Trozky, which called themselves the Bolsheviki. The Bolsheviki proceeded to make a separate peace with Germany in March, 1918, thereby setting free the German divisions which made possible the great Ludendorff drive. The March offensive in France very nearly won the war for Germany, before the American reinforcement could make its weight felt on the Western Front. The frightened Allies keenly resented the Russian defection and further disapproved of the confiscation of private property and the distribution of land to the peasants by which the Bolsheviki cemented their political power in the Soviet Union. Even before the Armistice, Allied and Ameri-

can troops were intervening in North Russia and Siberia, and subsequently the entire Soviet Union — as the new Russian Government styled itself — was blockaded, invaded and almost partitioned by her former Allies in a life-and-death struggle.

The revolutionary Communism preached by Lenin and Trotzky was regarded as a menace to vested interests everywhere in Europe, in European colonies in Asia, and in remote America. The word "Bolshevik" came to represent all that was bestial, bloody and ruthless; the greatest propaganda machine the world has ever seen bent itself to inflaming the American mind against a functioning socialism; and a label was coined with which American employers could combat the legitimate demands of labor for the next twenty years. For, far from collapsing before foreign invasion and subsidized counter-revolution, the Soviet Union proved stronger than its enemies. Intervention failed; Denikin, Kolchak and Wrangel failed; even famine failed to destroy this disturbing factor in world affairs. As the National Security League had foreseen, the American "way of life" was faced with a real menace: a going concern, the very existence of which was a fundamental criticism of all our social ideas and political institutions.

So the dominant mood in the hurly-burly of the post-armistice period was to lock and bolt all doors against alien ideas, alien goods, alien people. The guns had barely ceased grumbling when a horde of panic-stricken refugees — anyone who could scrape up the steamship fare — began clamoring for admission into the United States. Over Wilson's protest, an emergency restrictive immigration law was passed — a law which was to be rendered more and more drastic, by repeated amendments, until the coming of the depression under Hoover virtually suspended immigration into the United States. This meant, in effect, that the great wandering of the peoples, which had been halted by the mobilizations of 1914, was

never resumed. Europe was thus thrown back upon itself for the support of its population; America was thus deprived of the blood transfusion which had existed for over a century: those new citizens who were grist to Tammany's mill and who had manned the great Northern industries with docile, politically inexperienced labor — a constant supply of machine voters and strike-breakers.

This semi-acclimatised group was thus cut off from reinforcements. The greatest energies of American life were directed to their subjugation. In the South, the Ku Klux Klan was spreading the doctrine of hatred of Catholics, Jews and Negroes among the old-stock Americans. In the North, the American Legion was advancing as a useful "law-and-order" group of ready-made vigilantes. Throughout the rural sections, National Prohibition was regarded as the appropriate moral means for keeping the alien hordes of slum-dwellers in their place, and the Italians were already organizing the bootlegging business which was destined to bring them so much opprobrium and profit during the next ten years. The steel strike had been crushed, the coal strike had been crushed, private profiteering was in the saddle and Harding was in the White House.

The Republicans had always prided themselves on being the "Party of Prosperity." The G.O.P. concept of prosperity had been colored by the paper profits of War years, when we imported little from Europe and exported goods valued at billions of dollars to the belligerent nations, most of it financed from war loans. After the War, European industries threatened us with the dreadful fate of repaying their debt with goods. An emergency tariff law was enacted in 1921, and in 1922 the Fordney-McCumber Tariff undertook to put a stop to this nonsense. We shut ourselves in and waited for the consequences.

This first result was extremely embarrassing. It was a de-

pression. This post-war panic lasted well into 1922 and was punished in the usual way. The same elections which carried LaGuardia back into Congress, cut down the Republican majorities in both House and Senate by substantial margins and threatened the G.O.P. with possible defeat at the next Presidential election.

This was all the more likely because the Harding Administration, aided by the Ohio Gang which had manoeuvred his nomination by the G.O.P., had conducted itself with an exuberance which far out-did the worst excesses of Tammany Hall. There were scandals of such immensity that even today they seem incredible. The Teapot Dome business had not yet been broken to the public but enough was known or suspected to convince such an astute man as LaGuardia that the storm was going to break. After a decade of fighting against the New York Democratic Tammany, the Little Flower made the discovery that he himself was a member of the Republican Tammany at Washington. For those were the days of Harry and Mal Daugherty, of Jess Smith, of the Little Green House on K Street, of frauds and thievery on a scale hitherto not seen outside of American business, of an Administration half of whose Cabinet officers were tainted with suspicion or smeared with oil.

What made it all the more ironical was the fact that the "Little Flower" himself owed his election to methods which made Frank, his defeated Tammany rival for Congress, howl "intimidation" and "fraud" and demand a recount. The charges were investigated by a certain Ferdinand Pecora and the recount was held, as requested. As usual with such affairs, it did not alter the final result. The one fact which emerged was that LaGuardia had the support of a pretty tough gang: ugly-looking Italian hoodlums, who crowded into the polling-places and raised a yell whenever they saw anything they did not like or understand. Peculiar irony attaches to the spectacle

of Tammany objecting to the methods by which it had been winning city elections for generations, but it can hardly be doubted that LaGuardia owed his title as Congressman to the very sort of thing he had been fighting.

The next ten years of his life were to be the story of his break with both the national and the New York Tammany, how from being an irregular who could employ guerilla tactics effectively, he became a national institution, "Congressman-at-large for the U.S.A.", John the Baptist for the New Deal in both city and nation, a New Dealer before 1932, the equal in progressivism with Roosevelt, LaFollette and George W. Norris.

For, after turning its back on the pink intellectualism and parlor Bolshevism which were seeping into the metropolitan East, the country began its long, blind, incoherent struggle to deal with practical American problems in a practical American spirit. For want of a better name, this effort was called the Progressive movement. It first invaded and then paralyzed both old political Parties and was eventually to win national supremacy in the great wave of reform which carried Roosevelt into the White House and LaGuardia into the City Hall.

II

The ten years of LaGuardia's Congressional service fall naturally into three episodes: his emergence as a sort of national gad-fly with progressive tendencies during the period 1923-29, his campaign against Jimmy Walker for the mayorship of New York in 1929, and his vindication as a political prophet in the years which followed the Stock Market crash.

There is only one rule for successful progressivism in American politics, as Theodore Roosevelt had demonstrated: publicity, more publicity and always publicity. The "regular" is supported by the machine, but the progressive has to do and say things which command attention. He must be good for

“news” in the narrow journalistic sense and he must make his own news, for newspaper editors are wary and do not like to give away space to the myriad people who seek it.

LaGuardia steadily rose as a publicity value. In 1922, for example, he received only 25 notices in the *New York Times*. More and more, he learned how to force through to the public his activities and point of view, until in 1937 he was receiving about 1,000 press-notices a year, many of them on the “front page”, as he undertook to dramatize the administrative problems of a city of seven million people.

In the course of this drive for public attention, he learned to use effectively all the devices by which a man can break into the newspapers on his own terms. Among these were: 1) Vigorous letters to responsible public officials on matters of current news-interest, as when he wrote to Secretary of Labor “Puddler Jim” Davis about admitting to the U.S. Grand Duke Boris, Count Salm and Earl Craven; to the Secretary of Agriculture about the high cost of food; to Bishop Cannon about sailing on a “rum-soaked” British ship rather than a “bone-dry” American vessel. 2) Announcements and statements to the papers which had a news value for their radical sauciness, for their political independence, or for their challenges to stuffed shirts; 3) The introduction of bills or resolutions for inquiries in Congress which would give him a springboard from which to speak or write about the subjects; 4) Special investigations conducted by himself, as into the Pennsylvania bituminous coal strike situation or the S-4 submarine disaster; 5) Exposures forced by his daring, as of stock-market tipster activities or Prohibition enforcement methods; 6) Stunts, such as his public brewing of alcoholic beer and his brandishing of beef-steaks in the House of Representatives to illustrate his attack upon high living-costs. With little backing save his own versatility and sense of public opinion, he rose gradually from “two-stick” items on the inside pages to a

steady volume of front-page reader-interest. Despite occasional errors of taste and judgment, he has made himself "news" and commanded free advertising for his views for the last fifteen years.

It would be unfair to deduce that this represented cold-blooded calculation. Much of it was the natural expression of a fair-minded independence unusual in public life. A good example of this was his intervention with President Coolidge in 1923 to secure the pardon of his old enemy Craig, when a Federal Judge sentenced the New York City Comptroller to 60 days imprisonment for contempt of court. LaGuardia raised a howl, offered a bill granting the President power to pardon such offences and recommended the trial of contempt charges before a jury and an independent judge. Craig was pardoned, after a typical Copeland-to-Daugherty-to-"White House spokesman" play, and LaGuardia found himself on the front page in a big way.

It was a good time for personal decency in politics. Harding had just died and Coolidge had slouched into the Presidency. The farmers were grumbling, the McNary-Haugen movement was gathering force, Progressivism was in the air. In Congress, LaGuardia found himself thrown into contact with his fellow-westerners — LaFollette the Elder, Burt Wheeler and George Norris. Harding had succeeded in splitting the Republican Party almost as seriously as Taft had done, and the liberal Democrats were gathering their forces for an attack on the G.O.P., featuring the famous oil-scandals. Herculean efforts were required of Wall Street to prevent the nomination of the liberal McAdoo at the Madison Square Garden Convention. Governor Al Smith of New York, nominated by the still crippled Franklin D. Roosevelt, was used to block McAdoo, and the nomination was finally given to a safe-and-sane and sure-to-be-licked Morgan lawyer named John W. Davis.

In 1924, LaGuardia received 54 press-notices in the

Times. No other mere Member of Congress had ever so well impressed the public consciousness with his personality and point of view. He was as near a gad-fly as the Hoe high-speed press, the Deforest radio tube and the mass anonymity of the metropolitan jungles had yet produced. He soon cast in his lot with the Progressives and incurred the wrath of his Party by opposing Andrew Mellon's "Spare-the-Rich" tax proposals. The New York Republican Women's Club sent him a telegram of censure for his temerity in questioning the sanctity of "the greatest Secretary of the Treasury since Alexander Hamilton. A resident of New York's West End Avenue threatened to shoot Fiorello, and Speaker Louis A. Coolidge of Boston said, "If we don't put a stop to this tendency, in twenty years there won't be any free government in this Republic. We want home rule. That means lower taxes, fewer laws and no more confiscation of the results of thrift!" In reply, LaGuardia declared that if the Insurgents had not held the balance of power, the oil scandals would not have seen light.

In the elections that fall — elections which were to result in a landslide for Coolidge and a Wall Street grip on the Democratic Party for the next four years, LaGuardia bolted the Republican Party. He was endorsed by the American National Labor Party and by the Socialist Party, and he praised the LaFollette-Wheeler platform, drawn up by the Conference for Progressive Political Action, as the best since the Progressive Platform of 1912. He wrote Sam Koenig, the Republican Boss, saying that he did not support the reactionary attitude of the Republican majority on the Soldiers' Bonus, immigration, the Mellon tax plan, the postal salary increase, Prohibition, the Cape Cod Canal, Henry Ford and Muscle Shoals.

Into the campaign he piled, pursuing his gad-fly tactics, now saying of General Dawes' so-called attack on the Ku Klux Klan that "General Dawes praised the Klan with a faint damn", now urging the tenants of his District to vote for

himself because of his stand on rents and housing. He won again, this time by over 3,500 votes, having demonstrated his ability to win with or without Republican backing.

The Republican Caucus tried to discipline LaGuardia and his fellow-rebels, even before the new Congress assembled, and excluded him on the specific ground that he had been elected as a Socialist. Morning-after considerations had already induced Fiorello to ask the Clerk of the House to list him as a Progressive, not a Socialist, as he understood the American political mind and its receptivity to labels, tags, slogans and taboos. The Republicans were insistent but LaGuardia told them on the floor: "I serve notice now that I shall fight in New York City. You can kick me out of your caucus, but I can keep you out of the City Hall in New York City. It is interesting to be punished for irregularity, but let me tell what happened to me in New York when I carried the Republican ticket in 1919. When I was elected President of the Board of Alderman, carrying the Republican ticket in the municipal elections for the first time, the Party was so surprised they started a fight on me and the Republican legislature was so embarrassed that I should have carried the City of New York that they raised the salaries of every Democratic member of the Board of Estimate but didn't raise mine. I serve notice now that I shall fight you in New York, where the party is steadily fading away."

It was no idle threat. The eight years of Mayor Hylan were drawing to a close and the deals had already been made by which Mr. James J. Walker was to restore full-bodied Tammany control over America's greatest city. The New York Republicans *were* fading away and thus preparing for the situation which was to make the Governorship of the State a stepping-stone to the White House. In trading themselves out of the New York City vote, the Republicans were also trading themselves out of the State vote. And the State vote was a

large chunk of the national vote. 1925 was not a year when any anti-Tammany candidate had a whisper of a chance to reach the City Hall. LaGuardia himself had few illusions. He flirted with such opportunity to run for mayor as he could spy, received no substantial backing; he supported Hylan's effort to run as an independent and dropped it; he was mentioned as Socialist Candidate but was rejected, and finally endorsed Norman Thomas. In the meantime, he kept himself in the national picture by proposing a 90% Federal tax on the sale of professional baseball players, saying that it was "the only field in which an individual failed to profit through improved ability and transfer of his services." He also informed his constituents, in the annual report he made a practice of delivering to them, that President Coolidge had invented a new method of double-crossing the people, by recommending legislation which he had his Party leaders bill in Congress. He was elected Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Sons of Italy of New York State, in a campaign to rid that body of Fascist intrigues and to confine it to mutual self-help activities among Italian Americans.

When Walker thrashed Hylan in the primaries, Tammany heaved a sigh of relief and said that no third party threat worried it. The Republicans had nominated a harmless fellow named Waterman who was willing to make the great sacrifice; so LaGuardia put his City Hall ambitions in moth-balls and uttered the first of his famous "I told you so's". "The people of this city," he said, "have absolutely nothing to look forward to. I expect an uninteresting and meaningless campaign. Senator Walker (Jimmy had represented Tammany in the State Senate) in all likelihood will be elected. The people of New York City will receive a liberal education in public utilities ruling the city, favoritism in its basest sense, and a real 'everybody-getting-his' administration."

"The progressive movement," he added, "cannot be

crushed. Boss controlled parties are at their peak today. True progressives must not become discouraged. The fight is on and will continue."

It didn't look that way. In 1923, Fiorello had introduced the Borah Bill providing that the Supreme Court could not invalidate an Act of Congress, except by a 7-to-2 vote. (Where has Borah hidden his bill today?) The LaFollette-Wheeler ticket had been snowed under by Cautious Cal. New York had relapsed into the grosser form of machine control and the Stock Market was the dominant symbol of American life. LaGuardia continued the uneven tenor of his way, launching *L'Americolo*, a weekly magazine for Italian-Americans which later failed, horning in on General Billy Mitchell's trial for insubordination, and being sued by a batch of clients alleging careless legal practice.

By the turn of the year, however, the Little Flower was hitting his stride. In 1926 he was to rate 60 notices in the *New York Times* — that Dow-Jones index of political prominence. He was now carrying on almost entirely by showmanship. He wrote the Secretary of Labor saying that if the Countess Cathcart was excludable for moral turpitude so was her partner in adultery, Earl Craven, then in New York City. He asked poor old muscle-bound "Puddler Jim" Davis to investigate Count Salm von Hoogstraeten's "visible means of support", just as a year earlier he had protested against the admission of the Russian Grand Duke Boris as "an undesirable alien" and as a year later he was publicly to protest against a New York militia regiment giving Queen Marie of Roumania an honorary colonelcy. The score with the Archduchess Maria Jesefa was now practically even. It was good politics amid his East Side constituents. It was also good statesmanship, for no one then or later could explain how or why first-class immigrants were exempt from the laws which applied to steerage passengers. Just to keep his hand in, he opposed an appropriation to pur-

chase the Cape Cod Canal, a commercial white elephant in the hands of a disappointed group of investors headed by Mr. O. P. Belmont.

Then came his first masterstroke of showmanship. Prohibition had been a national law for six years. Poor people, preferably aliens, were constantly being jailed, fined or shaken-down by enforcement officials for possessing, making or transporting liquor. The country as a whole got plenty to drink as a result of various rum rows, boot-leggers, moonshiners and other short-cuts to the pursuit of liquid happiness. The farmers in general and the South and West in particular supported the Eighteenth Amendment and "it was in the Constitution." The McAdoo-Smith fight for the Democratic nomination in 1924 had been largely fought out on Prohibition and the Ku Klux Klan — two faces of the same Anglo-Saxon reaction against the "alien" city-bred Americans. LaGuardia was the first to pick the weaknesses in the poses and pretenses of Nordic morality, showing up the ancient Anglo-Saxon custom of keeping the right hand in ignorance of what the left hand is doing. It was the first conspicuous contribution of the "new immigration" to our public life; jibing and jeering us into national sheepishness over taking moralistic postures in practical matters.

All that LaGuardia did was to invite the newspaper men and photographers in to watch him make legally intoxicating beer in his office. He then repeated the process at the corner of 115th Street and Lenox Avenue in New York City, told the patrolman he was making beer and asked to be arrested. The cop refused to oblige and the gag was good for the front page in the news-scanty July days. He followed this national bid for attention by making a statement prophesying a New Party Deal in American politics — the first time the expression was used in that sense. "The conservative Republican of the East," he said, "has nothing in common with the Progressive Repub-

lican of the West. The Republican of the East is living in the memories of yesterday. The Progressive Republican of the West is looking to tomorrow. The liberal Democrats of the North have nothing in common with the bigoted Democrats of the South. They do not even speak the same language. While this artificial alignment is continued we are getting away from representative government."

This off his chest, he returned to the fold of the Eastern Republicans, received the G.O.P. nomination for Congress without opposition, and, after begging the police to arrest him for being in the picket-line in a garment-workers' strike and continuing his duel with Di Silvestro, leader of the pro-Fascist faction of the Sons of Italy, was reelected from the Twentieth New York District.

The country was moving into 1927 and the high-gearred paper prosperity of the Coolidge Administration offered few footholds for a progressive. He heckled Secretary Kellogg about the State Department's luckless "A.P." interview about a "Bolshevist hegemony between us and the Panama Canal." He added regular broadcasting via Station WRNY, concerning Congressional news, to his political bag of tricks. He made monkeys out of the Prohibition Unit, exposing the operation of Federal speakeasies for purposes of entrapping individuals into violations of the law. He moved to impeach Federal Judge Cooper of the Northern New York District. He assailed the use of American troops in China and Nicaragua. He combatted renewed charges of improper election methods in his campaign. He told the American Civil Liberties Union that the most insistent political issue of the day was "whether or not the people shall say what the law of the land shall be." If the Supreme Court declares an act of Congress unconstitutional, he argued, the next Congress should be able by a two-thirds vote to override the decision. "I'd rather have all the waste, the imperfections, the occasional bad politics of repre-

sentative government, than the most perfect, smooth-running dictatorship in the world."

By 1928, the picture had changed and the times were catching up with LaGuardia. That year he received 150 notices in the *New York Times*, despite the rise of stock-prices to Prof. Irving Fisher's "New Plateau" of prosperity, and the world was heading towards a crash. To make this crash absolutely certain, the Republicans were preparing to nominate Herbert C. Hoover for the Presidency. Fiorello's activities were phenomenal. After the S-4 Navy submarine disaster, he took a trip in her sister ship the S-8, reversed his criticism and exonerated the Navy. He investigated conditions in the Pittsburgh mining satrapy, anticipating the New Deal revelations on stranded communities, company stores, company police, company money, peonage and abuse of civil liberties.

He now began to show more of the John the Baptist and less of the St. Vitus streak in his character. He complained of public utilities running to Federal Courts to secure injunctions against the orders of State public service commissions, pointing to the bill he had introduced at every session of Congress since 1924 to stop this. It would have saved the T.V.A. and the American people a great deal since 1933 had LaGuardia been heeded then. Although stock-quotations had hit the stratosphere and Wall Street was making hey-hey while Coolidge prosperity continued, the Little Flower proposed to create a Federal Children's Relief Bureau to feed the children of workers on prolonged strike, of the unemployed, of poverty-stricken parents and of farmers in the distressed areas. This did not appeal to the Republican Party. He opposed the \$274,000,000 Navy Appropriation and folded up Fred Britten of Illinois when the latter asserted we needed a big Navy to ward off Communism. He urged justice for Puerto Rico, Haiti and Nicaragua — anticipating the "Good Neighbor" policy by seven years. He tangled with the Federal Judges over the

I.R.T. decisions and submitted — unsuccessfully — planks for the Republican National Platform of 1928, proposing modification of Prohibition enforcement, Federal control of the Power Trust as a national menace and protection of the people's interests in all national resources, prevention of the Federal judiciary meddling with local utility regulation, the Outlawry of War, political autonomy for Puerto Rico, and the end of Federal injunctions in labor disputes.

He also found time to go to Berlin that August, where he spoke in German to the delegates of thirty-seven nations in a meeting of the Interparliamentary Union, held in the assembly room of the Reichstag! It was only 1928, and Hitler had still five years to go before the Reichstag was burned, parliamentarism discredited and LaGuardia himself *persona non grata* in Germany.

His campaign for reelection was characterized by smart showmanship, by a very useful endorsement from the American Federation of Labor, and by a political benediction from the G.O.P. high priest, Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia, who described the Little Flower as "a genuine liberal who at the fortunate cost of alienating the bigots, the intolerants and the persecutors, will stand for American principles of government and social order, for the historical teachings and ideals of the Republican Party and in favor of those truly progressive policies upon which the opportunities of the individual man and the lasting prosperity can alone depend. I greatly hope that LaGuardia will be elected by a substantial majority."

You could almost "waltz to it!" At any rate, LaGuardia danced back into office. Herbert C. Hoover, the Great Humanitarian and Engineer, was elected President of the United States by a landslide vote which broke the Solid South.

Shortly after that time, the British steamer "Vestris", bound from New York to Buenos Aires, developed a heavy list

to starboard and slowly foundered with heavy loss of life on the highseas. The LaGuardia gad-fly was in quickly with demands for better steamboat inspection and liability of ship-owners to passengers — measures which were neatly pigeon-holed and fatally forgotten for six more years until the "Morro Castle" and other disasters temporarily revived them. To those who are interested in parallels, however, the whole Republican Administration might be symbolized by the "Vestris", heeling over farther and farther, shipping water, and finally going down, because the cargo was badly stowed, the inspectors were fixed, the officers were timid, and the owners trying to avoid salvage charges on a tow. John the Baptist was about to come into his own.

III

The John the Baptist of the New Deal did not seem to realize that his years in the wilderness were nearly done. The country as a whole went serenely ahead, just as though the events of 1928 had not provided a dress rehearsal for the coming catastrophe.

As early as 1927, Calvin Coolidge had issued a cagey type-written statement to the newspaper correspondents who were reporting his summer vacation in the Black Hills: "I do not choose to run in 1928." This took him out of the coming campaign and threw the nomination to his self-confident, millionaire Secretary of Commerce, Hoover. The "liberal" Republicans, led by Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, failed to secure a "wet" plank in the platform adopted by the Kansas City Convention, and the G.O.P. stood pat on its record. At Houston, Texas, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, now far advanced in his cure, again placed Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York in nomination for the Presidency, and the Democrats marched forth, under the "Happy Warrior" and Senator Robinson of Arkansas, for their last and worst defeat.

The campaign which followed brought to a head all of those antipathies which had racked America since the war. Smith was a Catholic, a product of the city streets, a Tammany politician. To bolster his ticket in New York, he drafted Roosevelt to run for the Governorship which he — Al — had held for four terms. If Smith won the campaign, he would thus have an ally at Albany; if he lost, he would still be able to govern New York State by proxy. It was an ingenious calculation. Smith lost, of course, for the "bigotry campaign" which ensued shook the country to the abysmal depths of passion and prejudice. Among other things, the campaign advertised throughout the nation the vices and characteristics of "Tammany" and revealed a bias against citizens of foreign origin and urban environment — a revelation which shocked the country into a more tolerant attitude. This reaction was aided by the business situation.

Disquieting symptoms of economic maladjustment had appeared. Stock-market values had been sustained only by the issuance of "bullish" statements from the Federal Reserve Board and White House; speculation in industrial securities had become a mania rivalling the "South Sea Bubble", the "Tulip Craze" and other irrational mass-gambling of the past; basic farm commodities were accumulating in unwieldy surpluses which threatened to reduce prices and embarrass the speculators on the Chicago Board of Trade. The Soviet Union had not only survived after Mr. Hoover had described it as an "economic vacuum", but had reëntered the world markets as an exporter of farm commodities. Business had its "prosperity", but the construction industry had slumped alarmingly, there was heavy unemployment — about 3,000,000 — and no signs of abatement of the sullen, bloody struggle for collective bargaining in the heavy industries.

The Republicans thought they had the answer. Hoover called a Special Session of Congress, to create the Federal

Farm Board — a new agency designed to buy up surplus farm commodities and equalize their flow at profitable prices into the markets — and to revise the protective tariff.

LaGuardia also seems to have had little or no inkling of what lay ahead for the nation during this period. He was busy building himself up as a candidate to run for Mayor against Jimmy Walker in the fall of 1929. He was writing again for the papers, this time for Bernarr Macfadden's *New York Daily Graphic* which featured a column — "I'm Telling You Confidentially" — by-lined as "By F. H. LaGuardia, America's Most Liberal Congressman." In this column, Fiorello issued an election manifesto urging reduced gas rates, reduced electricity rates, State conservation of all water power, more State parks, better liability laws, old-age pensions, and the eradication of preventable diseases. In this column he attacked the Power Trust as "the most vicious, cruel, greedy combination ever created anywhere"; he declared that "Judges must take the law as Congress passes it"; he attacked Coolidge's policy on Boulder Dam; he declared that Andrew Mellon was not as good a financial administrator as the average New York house-wife; he urged the removal of Federal Judges for unfitness, temperament, inaptitude, utter lack of ability, judicial unfitness, as well as for the misdemeanors justifying impeachment; he attacked the sale of Shipping Board vessels to private operators for 2½% cash; he called attention to the critical importance of the Supreme Court's decision in the O'Fallon Railway Case which permitted upward revision of all railway rates; he urged disarmament, criticized Mr. Mellon's smooth-running system of tax-refunds, advocated the end of the "lame-duck" Congress — and attacked Jimmy Walker's Central Park Casino: "Just think of a public park, paid for and supported by the people and maintained for their use and comfort, being transformed into a *giardino* of a high-priced exclusive rendezvous for the frivolous."

A new note of rather steady statesmanship, shrewdly combined with local New York politics, ran through these writings, but one searches vainly for a hint of the coming storm over Wall Street which was to do more for political progressivism than all the writings of all the Progressives since the World War.

This time, the Republicans were quite willing to let Fiorello make the race. They knew that no Republican could beat Jimmy Walker, for the political companion-piece to Hoover's nation-wide landslide of 1928 was bound to be a similarly crushing Tammany victory in New York City in 1929. So it turned out, and LaGuardia was one of the worst-licked candidates for Mayor in the history of New York politics.

But his race proved to be not only a curtain-raiser for the successful Fusion campaign of 1933, but the opening gun in the duel between Roosevelt and Tammany which was to clear the way for the New Deal campaign of 1932.

The hopeless battle against Jimmy Walker, then the gayest, most irresponsible, amusing figure in American public life, opened with all the deep organ-music with which the Republicans approach a foregone defeat. LaGuardia issued a great manifesto against the Tammany administration, which had turned out precisely as he had prophesied. He declared that the city's current expenses for four years of Mayor Walker's administration were \$597,000,000 more than the amount spent during the last four years of the Hylan Administration, which Walker had condemned as extravagant.

LaGuardia then made a series of charges which were to bob up later in the Seabury Investigation which drove genial Jimmy from public life and cleared the way to the White House for Governor Roosevelt. LaGuardia charged: 1) Graft in Queens sewers; 2) Embezzlement in the County Clerk's office; 3) The transfer of the head of the graft-riddled Health Department to the office of Director of the Budget; 4) Whole-

sale and petty graft on pushcart peddlers in the Department of Markets, graft and payroll-padding in the ash and snow-removal activities of the Street-Cleaning Department; 5) compulsion of private business in its dealings with the City to pay "retainers" to members of Walker's machine; 6) Under-assessment of Tammany favorites by the Tax Department; 7) Contracts let without competitive bidding in defiance of the law; 8) Special privileges and concessions farmed out for nominal sums to favored concerns — William F. Kenny's firm being allowed a monopoly worth a million dollars a year for the tanks which transported gasoline through the city streets; 9) Walker's wise-cracks when graft was called to his attention; 10) Enough waste to have built the East River Tunnel and the Triborough Bridge without toll and to have bought 100 small playgrounds for the city's children; 11) A Transit policy with no plans for coördination or consolidation, the 8th Avenue city-owned subway nearing completion but unable to operate for two more years because of failure to let contracts for cars and equipment; 12) favoritism in granting franchises to the Equitable Bus Co., a "financial cripple", without public hearings; 13) The only housing constructed by the City under Walker, the Central Park Casino; 14) Patronage in the public school system; 15) Perpetuation of an antiquated and costly system of food distribution, 16) Police incompetence in the face of the Rothstein murder, which had caused the resignation of two Police Commissioners in three years — McLaughlin and Warren.

This sort of thing rolled easily off the mind of a public which was watching the ticker-tape. So did LaGuardia's pledges to stamp out corruption, handle transit as a business problem, establish bus lines, plan for the city's future, clean up petty abuses, establish public markets, build scientific sewage disposal plants, provide more parks and playgrounds for the city's poor and drive the rich out of the Central Park Casino,

apply civil service standards to the city employees, and reorganize the City Departments so as to eliminate the duplication and overlapping of functions and the resulting waste. It would all give better government for less money. This, in essence, was the winning platform which he adopted in 1933. In 1929 it sounded like the usual insincere drivel of an "out" trying to become an "in".

His candidacy was received with mixed emotions by the "goo-goos" who drop like vultures on a dying political campaign. Dr. Butler was generous in his praise, calling LaGuardia "intelligent, courageous, independent and distinctly liberal in speech and vote" and evading the horrid charge that Fiorello was a Socialist: "I hear it said that Congressman LaGuardia is something of a Socialist. One definition of a Socialist is that he is a person who is anxious to get possession of and to spend the money of other people. On the strength of that definition there are a great many more advanced Socialists on Manhattan Island than Major LaGuardia." Mr. Ogden L. Mills also moved austerely to the rescue and reassured "the better element": "His methods may be vigorous, on occasions turbulent, for he cares enough to get mad, but if ever a quality was needed any time, anywhere, a capacity for indignation is demanded in New York City today. It is the only possible antidote to the smiling complacency and cynical indifference that have lowered the morale of the public service, bred inefficiency, and brought us back to the days when municipal government in the United States was synonymous with bad government."

"Smiling complacency and cynical indifference?" Not a bad phrase for Hooverism at Washington. As events were to prove, New York and Washington are not in water-tight compartments.

Other interested commentators were not so charitable. The sweetly unreasonable Citizens Union turned its "searchlight"

on his career and sanctimoniously reported that "he encouraged and echoed Hylan in the output of cheap claptrap and blatant demagoguery that passed for declarations of policy, his voice at times drowning out Hylan's own" and concluded, "In short, it is difficult to find in Mr. LaGuardia's record anything tangible upon which to base hope that as Mayor he could formulate and adhere to a constructive program of administration."

Mr. Norman Thomas, the highly respectable Socialist candidate for Mayor, pooh-poohed the notion that LaGuardia was a Socialist: "Having repudiated both parties and joined the LaFollette movement, he was given the Socialist nomination, which he sorely craved. When the LaFollette movement broke up he became a Republican again. The Mayor thus enjoys the distinction of having run at some time or other on all three tickets with a legal place on the New York ballot. He also has been nominated or endorsed by some three or four other parties or groups, now dead. . . . This record does not make Mr. LaGuardia a Socialist. It makes him a chameleon or sort of political Vicar of Bray."

The ensuing campaign produced such disaffection in his party that it was not until the week before election day that the *New York Herald-Tribune* gave him its luke-warm endorsement, saying, "We are no surer of his Republicanism today than then" (at the opening of the campaign), but "whatever may be Mr. LaGuardia's mistakes in national politics, we are satisfied that he is everlastingly right in his view of New York's fundamental issue." When it was all over he made the remark that, "They thought I was too radical, so the Republicans voted for Norman Thomas", and took notes for the future management of that "better element" which is so influential in determining newspaper opinion and so impotent at the polls. Four years later, for example, during his winning campaign he kept a tailor in constant attendance

to keep him pressed and well-groomed, and in office strove to build up the picture of a responsible, level-headed chief magistrate and capable city executive — to offset the stereotype picture of himself as a “little Wop”.

In 1929, he still had much to learn. It was a dirty campaign, as hopeless Republican campaigns are apt to be. Richard Enright, Hylan's former Chief of Police, was running on a Square Deal Party ticket and broke the news that City Hall officials and Judges had received loans from Arnold Rothstein, whose unsolved murder in 1928 was in the back of New York politics. LaGuardia followed up by revealing that Magistrate Vitale had received a \$19,940 loan from the notorious gambler. The charge was admitted. Fiorello followed up with a charge of Tammany tax favors to Sam Untermyer, August Heckscher, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the Wanamaker Estate, the Bankers Trust Company, etc. The parties accused promptly made denial, in such detail as to take the news-value out of the charges by boring the public with statistics of time, place, price, and values.

Jimmy Walker finally was led to declare with charming hauteur: “I have had all sorts of opponents during the twenty years of my political career. They have been gentlemen for the large part . . . but the one I listened to tonight (LaGuardia) closes the door for ever on that. Can anyone expect me to keep my good-nature in this campaign? I refuse to go any further than the gutter. I will not go down in a sewer.” Norman Thomas, said Walker, “is at least an intelligent gentleman. He at least gives the rest of us credit for having some intelligence, and the people have the satisfaction of feeling that if he were elected we would at least have dignity (!) and self-respect in the City Hall and not the hoodlumism and rowdyism that is promised by the Republican candidate.”

Al Smith was avenged! The G.O.P. which had raised its lorgnette so effectively against that graduate of Fulton Fish

Market in 1928 was to see the Republican candidate for Mayor a year later branded as socially inferior by a Tammany wise-cracker.

In retrospect, the campaign sounds impressive but the fact is that few people outside of the political club-houses and editorial offices of New York City were paying any attention to City Politics. They had other things to worry them. The Stock Market had made its final spectacular tail-spin and the Exchange had been closed the Friday and Saturday before Election Day. The three candidates earnestly discussed the "fundamental issues" in the Sunday papers, but the people were reading about the prospects for reopening of the market or were busy with margin-calls. There was a profusion of assurances that conditions were "fundamentally sound", Dr. Julius Klein had sounded off, the elder Mr. Rockefeller had "begun to buy", Charley Mitchell of the National City Bank thought the "decline" had gone beyond the true values of the market, Mr. Thomas W. Lamont explained that there were "air pockets" uncovered on the way down, etc. etc.

Few people seemed to sense that "Republican prosperity" lay in ruins and that a new political deal was on the way. On Monday, LaGuardia listed the reforms he proposed to initiate: reorganization of city government, transit unification, reorganization of the school board, etc. etc. And the Communist candidate called all three principal rivals for Mayor, "Capitalist tools!"

"Stocks Sag 2 to 17 Points in Day of Orderly Selling"; "Sessions Cut to 3 Hours"; "Prices Decline Steadily"; "Huge Blocks Offered at Opening"; "Selling Wave Marks the Close" (six million shares in three hours); "Markets to be Open from 10 to 1 Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, to Ease Strain." This was *the* news of the day, little space was devoted to the opening of the polls, last-minute rallies, etc. The result was as might have been expected.

LaGuardia was terribly defeated: Walker 865,000; LaGuardia 368,000; Thomas 175,000. Walker plurality 497,000. ("Stocks Off 5 to 66 Points As Heavy Selling Goes On"; "Steel Touches Low"; six million shares in another half day's trading.) It was the worst licking a Republican had taken in years: LaGuardia had polled only 26% of the votes, where Waterman in 1925 had received 34%, Curran 29% in 1921 and Mitchel 58% in 1913. The "better element" had deserted the "Little Wop" at the very moment "Republican Prosperity" was deserting "the better element."

LaGuardia was "a dangerous man to beat". The timing of events insured that the next time he ran for office he would be elected. The mistaken policies of the Republican National Administration had made it certain that the old pattern would repeat itself, that a Democrat would enter the White House and a Republican the City Hall. The "Little Flower" was now in his late forties, an experienced and resolute man, who could afford to return to his seat in Congress and wait for the whole structure of national Tammanyism to come tumbling down.

He had begun the year by marrying his secretary, Miss Marie M. Fisher, who had seen him through his political career and domestic sorrows since 1916. She was then thirty-three years old. In tribute to her abilities, her husband promptly hired three secretaries to take her place. He had left behind him the agonies and frustrations of youth and was prepared to settle down into the grim year-in-year-out fight for progressive politics. His second wife was there to help him and advise him, and even today it is whispered that the "Little Flower" makes his worst mistakes when Mrs. LaGuardia is out of town.

He took his defeat in his stride and returned to Washington, where the Hoover Administration was still wrestling with its Tariff Bill and where a series of White House Conferences had

spread the comforting word that Prosperity was not dead, it was just sleeping or on a journey, and would soon come back from around the corner. Privately, the President was warning his intimates that a great depression had just begun and that it would last for several years.

IV

The three years which followed witnessed the desperate efforts of Hoover and his Wall Street backers to resurrect the golden corpse of the paper prosperity of the 1920's, but all they succeeded in doing was to galvanize the stock-ticker into the Dance of Death, resulting in a tremendous upsurge of popular resentment against the Republicans and all their works, led by LaGuardia and his fellow-Progressives in Congress.

Hoover's task was hopeless. Stock prices continued to decline and the depression proved to be world-wide in scope: the penalty of an unjust, impolitic and uneconomic international settlement in 1919. After 1929, American investors lacked the means to finance German reparations. By the spring of 1931, war debt and reparation payments were discontinued in an effort to stave off general collapse and default. By the autumn of that year, England had abandoned the Gold Standard and overthrown the Labor Government. Japan sprang like a tiger at Manchuria and began the process of conquering China which was to continue with few interruptions for the next few years. In Germany, Adolf Hitler and his National Socialists ceased to be a laughing-stock and became a serious factor in world affairs. Banks began crashing, bread-lines lengthened, farm-prices collapsed, evictions and foreclosures increased, unemployment mounted, investments depreciated and the whole structure of American capitalism faced disaster.

It was during this period that LaGuardia emerged as the

John the Baptist of the New Deal. Others shared in this rôle, above all his fellow-Progressives from the West, but he alone in the Republican Party represented the revolt of the Eastern industrial workers and city-dwellers against the break-down of the G.O.P. system. While Governor Roosevelt bided his time at Albany, fenced cautiously with Tammany and began building himself up for the Democratic nomination in 1932, LaGuardia was at Washington fighting for many of the measures which were later incorporated by Roosevelt in the New Deal.

As early as March of 1929, LaGuardia had attacked the archaic bankruptcy laws and had urged greater protection for creditors and stockholders in the judicial racket of trustee arrangements and receiverships. As early as June, he had advocated liberalizing the postal laws so as to permit the mailing of sex hygiene literature. By February of 1930 he had hit his stride. He had started impeachment proceedings against Federal Judge Winslow of the Southern New York District and the jurist had resigned rather than stand trial. When subsequently Winslow was named a referee in a New York City waterworks valuation suit, Fiorello said: "Had I known that any judge would ever appoint him a referee in important cases I surely would not have consented to the dropping of the charges. Bear in mind that when Judge Winslow walked out of the Federal Court he left a trail of lawyers who were disbarred, some went to jail, one committed suicide, and all the facts have never been fully disclosed or made public." Fiorello had discovered the fatal chink in the Old Guard armor: the Federal Courts.

A month later he was at it again, after a vain fight and another prophesy of disaster against the Administration's efforts to turn over profitable mail contracts to shipowners without competitive bidding, or even advertising for bids. He said that the American merchant marine could never be built up by

"backroom ward politician methods" and pointed out that the Export Line, Moore & McCormick, and the Panama-Pacific Line had old tubs which were being run on postal subsidies. Then he hit the judiciary again, calling on the Attorney-General for information regarding Judge Anderson of Tennessee, with a view to impeachment. The charges hinted at complicity with drug-racketeers. LaGuardia told the House: "It is again my unpleasant duty to announce that I am about to file charges against another Federal Judge." It had indeed been an error of judgment for the Republican managers to assign LaGuardia to the Judiciary Committee. Since his departure from Congress, no such bulldog has been appointed to a position where the Federal Judges could be embarrassed by his zeal.

Fiorello was still fighting Tammany methods wherever they appeared, but he was beginning to win a hearing at last. He failed to block the sale of the Hoboken Piers by the Shipping Board to private interests — the Old Guard were scrambling for pennies now — but he secured attention when he exposed as forgeries the "Communist Documents" which Walker's Police Commissioner, Grover Whalen, claimed to have seized in the offices of the Soviet State trading agency — the Amtorg — at New York, and produced proof that Whalen knew the documents were spurious before he announced them to the press. LaGuardia also voted vainly against the "Red Inquiry" under Congressman Hamilton Fish, Jr., voted by the House, which he predicted would turn to "open shop propaganda". The truth was that the Soviet Union had started economic planning under the first "Five-Year Plan" and world-wide attention was focussed on the experiment, while economic conditions in the Planless Republic of the Great Engineer went from bad to worse. It was desirable to raise the Communist bugaboo once more, with an eye on 1932. LaGuardia argued that the House ought to investigate unemployment,

rather than Communism, the cause rather than the effect.

Not even Hamilton Fish, Jr. could check the march of destiny. The 1930 elections were a terrible blow to the Republicans, who lost control of the House of Representatives for the first time since 1916. Garner of Texas replaced Nick Longworth of Ohio as Speaker of the House. LaGuardia came back into Congress by a margin of nearly 2,000 votes. Together with the "Allied Progressives", he held the balance of power and proceeded to make political history in the closing two-year struggle against Hooverism. He had his troubles. *L'Americolo*, the paper he had founded two years earlier, had failed and he kept himself poor paying its debts, rather than hide behind the corporate fiction and let the creditors whistle for their money. He had trouble with a \$48,000 campaign deficit, and the "Prosperity is just around the corner" claque was still going strong.

It was at this moment Fiorello took on the all-powerful Insulls, the utility "wizards" of Chicago. Challenged by Martin Insull to repeat his Power Trust charges without the protection of Congressional immunity, LaGuardia repeated them in the street, claiming that "there is a vicious association of various power and electrical companies. Mr. Insull, while pretending to be speaking in the interest of the public, was really plugging for the sale of stock. His (radio) speech was made on time paid by a firm of stockbrokers. Had Mr. Insull's speech been given to any newspaper under the same circumstances and the same auspices, it would have had to be labelled — 'advertisement' — on the top and at the bottom of each column". This was in answer to an Insull broadcast claiming that "The power trust is a myth exploited by political aspirants with socialistic tendencies." When Martin Insull was told of LaGuardia's retort, he laughed. Not long after that laugh, Martin was a fugitive in Canada, while the great Sam Insull was dodging extradition in Greece.

LaGuardia was now going in for big game hunting. He branded the "great" Hoover Moratorium as an usurpation of the powers of Congress. When Silas H. Strawn and Julius H. Barnes of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce branded unemployment insurance as "a form of dole", Fiorello struck back savagely. "Food given to the millions of hungry children of the unemployed," he said, "will taste just as good, even if labeled by the White House as a 'dole'. I can conceive of nothing more ungenerous and contrary to the spirit of the philosophy of civilization than to plan to make odious an acceptance from their own government of relief by needy people." The Old Guard "label-pinning" game was on, the game in which the abolition of child labor was to be labeled "Youth Control", and pay-envelope propaganda to be levelled against the Social Security Act. But in 1931, people had begun to listen to LaGuardia and to question the labels which Wall Street pins so adroitly on things it doesn't like. In the face of Hoover's soothing reassurances on taxes, the little fellow warned that an increase in Federal Income taxes could not be avoided, and urged support for Governor Roosevelt's plan for unemployment relief at public expense, instead of the great White House "Relief Drives", charity mobilizations and Red Cross responsibility.

Then came 1932 — the year of the Elections — when the "Little Flower" really offended the powers-that-be. The great twenty-year mirage of American multimillionaires has ever been the abolition of the graduated income tax and the payment of the costs of running America by the mass of poor people. The DuPonts were whooping it up for Prohibition Repeal, under the innocent belief that thereby billions of liquor revenue would flow to the Treasury and thus relieve the upper-bracketeers. LaGuardia was entirely agreeable to Repeal, but his eye was on the play prepared by Mr. Bernard M. Baruch, Mr. William R. Hearst, Speaker Garner and their

stable of Southern Conservatives, for a general sales tax. This was called, in an unsuccessful label-pinning operation, "the manufacturers' sales tax", but it did not deceive LaGuardia and his fellow-progressives. He put forward his own substitute: a list of "nuisance taxes" (again the inevitable "label") on bankchecks, drafts, contracts, conveyances, deeds, mortgages, receipts and acquittances, on safety deposit boxes and vaults, on stock transfers and stock loans, on the face value on bonds, on radios, phonographs, cosmetics, perfumes, jewelry and works of art, on automobiles, trucks and accessories, higher first-class postage and a 59% surtax on incomes above \$1,000,000 a year.

It was a supremely daring raid on the preserves of the "Best Minds" of the Old Guard, allied to Tammany Democrats (those representatives of the poor and down-trodden!) and Baruch Democrats from the boll-weevil belt. LaGuardia mustered fifty Democrats in his Progressive Bloc and defeated the "manufacturers' sales tax." The sales tax proposal was amended in committee to exempt farm implements, wearing apparel, all foods, medical supplies, but the fight was won. The *New York Times* gravely rebuked LaGuardia for "wild and whirling words" in "taking up the cry that the way to raise enough revenue to balance the budget is to 'soak the rich'" and for tossing "a nice, new shiny monkey wrench" into the well-oiled works.

Almost single-handed he had beaten the multimillionaires of both major Parties.

From then on, it was a brawl. In April he made the sacrilegious charge that J. P. Morgan & Co. dictated the policies of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and said that it was "an institution for financial incurables." He hit back at the conservative papers by proving that financial reporters for the *New York Times*, *New York Herald-Tribune*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Evening Post*, *Evening Mail* and *Financial America*, had

received a total of nearly \$300,000 in gratuities from the publicity agent for pool operators on the Stock Exchange, then under indictment for fraud. He urged closer regulation of the securities business and took a crack at Dick Whitney's view that no regulation was needed.

By May he raised his bag of Federal Judges to five by urging impeachment of Judge Harold Louderback of the Northern California District. The others had been Winslow of New York, who had resigned; Cooper of New York, who was officially censured for his conduct; Anderson of Memphis, Tennessee, who was also censured, and Judge English of Illinois, who was impeached but resigned rather than face charges. The conservatives had not yet realized the importance of labelling judicial reform as "Court-packing", but the foundations for the constitutional struggle of 1937 were clearly laid by LaGuardia in his decade of successful judge-hunting.

By June, LaGuardia was urging the use of Federal funds to encourage slum-clearance, was again calling attention to the archaic bankruptcy laws, and was criticizing that agile man, Mr. Charles Gates Dawes, for his connection with the strange R.F.C. \$80,000,000 loan to the Dawes Bank — the Central Republic, which later had to be "reorganized". In an open telegram he rebuked President Hoover for the military eviction of the Bonus-Marchers from their "Hoovertown" encampment on the Anacostia Flats: "Soup is cheaper than tear bombs and bread better than bullets in maintaining law and order in these times of depression, unemployment and hunger."

That was the year of the great New Deal campaign. Governor Roosevelt had evaded the traps set for him by the Ba-ruch-Garner-Hearst combination and received the Democratic nomination at Chicago. The Republicans were now panicky and lost their heads. LaGuardia denounced Wall Street as "pirates who call themselves financiers. If a grocer sold a can of beans with the deceit, fraud and misrepresenta-

tion that stocks and bonds are sold, he'd be in Atlanta under the pure food act. As surely as night follows day, we are going to have supervision and control of the stock and commodity exchanges and stop this sort of thing." If any man had ever deserved re-election in the New Deal landslide which lay clearly ahead, it was LaGuardia.

He lost. Money from unspecified sources was poured into his district. James J. Lanzetta, the Secretary of the same Tammany Hall which had fought Roosevelt "before Chicago", defeated the "Little Flower" by nearly 1,400 votes in a record turn-out of the Twentieth District, in the name of the New Deal candidate. It is never safe to come between a multimillionaire and his taxes, and when LaGuardia had blocked the sales tax he had marked himself for reprisal at the first opportunity.

LaGuardia had been defeated but the progressive cause had triumphed. The independents who had followed Theodore Roosevelt in 1912 and the elder LaFollette in 1924, had followed Franklin Roosevelt in 1932 and had inflicted a crushing defeat upon the conservative Republicans. For the first time in twenty years a liberal administration was possible, for the first time in seventy years it was conceivable that liberalism might remain in the saddle.

Then came the terrible winter of the "interregnum", the winter when Hoover and Ogden Mills failed to snare Roosevelt into an endorsement of their fatal financial policies and then accused him of "unwillingness to coöperate", the winter when Technocracy swept the country like a brush fire, the winter when the banks went popcorn, the last winter of the "Lame Duck" Congress which the Progressives were to abolish.

LaGuardia took advantage of the "lame duck" session to begin a period of intimate and informal coöperation with the President-elect, which was to increase his own prestige and to provide the first installment of that torrent of reforms which

burst upon the country after the banking crisis of March, 1933.

Early in December, 1932, he went on the radio under the auspices of the League for Industrial Democracy and called for a new economic deal, in addition to a new political deal. It was a body blow at the old idea that when things went wrong with business you simply changed the men in charge of the political administration, not touching the basic policies which had encouraged economic dislocation. "The privileged classes and the small minority who have caused the present financial debacle and the collapse of their economic system," he said, "still seem to have complete control of the government. They demand protection from any innovation or change by invoking alleged rights under a Constitution drafted and adopted at a time when free land was unlimited, food plentiful, electricity unknown and hand labor and man power the only means of production.

"We can no longer quibble on Constitutional constructions. The only way to save the Constitution is to save the people of your country. If industrial conditions have so changed, if the economic system is collapsing, if the tillers of the soil are becoming enslaved to an economic feudal system, then it is necessary to construe the Constitution in the light of the day in which we are living and to meet existing conditions.

"If States' rights interfere with economic progress, they must give way," he continued, urging the need for uniform child labor laws, Federal if necessary. He also said there must be Federal unemployment insurance, uniform pension laws and an adjustment of the hours of labor according to the needs. "The farmers and the industrial workers have been kept apart by the stock ticker boys and politicians long enough," he concluded.

He then returned to his pet subject of Prohibition. He had already reprimanded the grinning, greedy short-sighted brewers and distillers as the cause of Prohibition. He strove to

attach a rider to a pending bill to legalize 3.2% beer, providing for Federal control of sales. After side-swiping the would-be purveyors of profitable intoxication, he went on to attack his old hate, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. He claimed that the R.F.C. had adopted a high interest rate policy to curry favor in financial circles. He declared that neither the railroads, industry, agriculture nor the government could continue to pay the high rates demanded by the bankers. He proposed lowering of interest to 3% a year. He continued his sermon: "Now, lest I be misunderstood as criticizing the directors of the Home Loan Bank by innuendo, I am going to save them that trouble. I say that the board and the Home Loan Banks are purposely sabotaging the law in order to continue the usurious rates of building loan associations and banks that exact usurious rates of interest. The Home Loan Banks to date have not benefited the home owner." Both of these institutions, their practices and their interest-rates were revamped by Roosevelt along the lines LaGuardia indicated.

By the end of 1932, LaGuardia had introduced bills to aid debtors, individuals, railroads and corporations, according them the right to file petitions requesting an extension arrangement with their creditors. Pending the disposition of this petition, further action by any creditor would be stayed. An arrangement similar to this was later to become famous as "Section 77B" of the Federal Bankruptcy Act.

As the winter wore on, LaGuardia had the satisfaction of seeing the Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Bill pass, and other measures which the Progressives had sought for years — including the Federal Emergency Relief Administration — became law. He coöperated with Adolph A. Berle, Jr., of the Roosevelt "Brain Trust" to introduce needed railway legislation and in general put himself at the service of the New Deal.

After the Bank Holiday and the beginning of the "hundred days", LaGuardia was out of office and in a position to in-

dulge in a series of "I-told-you-so's". He truthfully asserted that the newspapers had been unwilling to inform the public of the extent of the financial disaster. He advanced the theory that charity only increases the evil of unemployment, saying, "If the right to live interferes with profits, profits must necessarily give way to that right" and added that "the economic principles of yesterday are as obsolete as the oxcart." He commented on the revelation that Mr. J. P. Morgan had paid no Federal income tax during the depth of the depression and urged changes in the Constitution to bring about equality of opportunity. He said that this could not be done so long as "a few senile judges fail to realize the changes which modern times have brought in the construction of the laws and put the same construction upon them as they did fifty and sixty years ago."

Unfortunately for Mr. Roosevelt he did not realize that John the Baptist had not completed his crying in the wilderness in November 1932. The New Deal was then under the influence of Prof. Felix Frankfurter's attractive theory that the Supreme Court would be "flexible" in the face of the emergency, supplemented by the realistic notion that some of the nine old men might die or resign before they had a chance to sabotage the New Deal reforms. The golden opportunity was lost to amend the Constitution or reform the Courts, and by the time Roosevelt got around to it, five years later, the first wave of the national emergency had passed and the privileged minority were again in a position to block progress.

LaGuardia had entered Congress in 1923, with a reputation for unpredictable political irregularity, the mannerisms of a "show-off", and a degree of complicity in old-style machine politics which made him suspect for years to come. He left Congress in 1933, with a reputation for consistent progressivism, a nation-wide prestige, and an intensely practical relationship with the New Deal forces which were working for real

reform in New York City and in the nation. He had mastered the timing of political events — always the hardest lesson for a liberal to learn, though not so difficult for a Western progressive — and was ready to make himself Mayor of New York City, twenty years after his first naïve entry into its public life.

4. "AMERICA'S NO. 1 MAYOR"

I

THE events of the four years following 1933 were to provide the first test of whether the World War and the World Depression had made any real change in the pattern of American politics. During those four years, Fiorello LaGuardia made himself Mayor of New York City, promoted himself nationally as "Mayor of the U.S.A." and at the end faced that very realignment of political parties which he had prophesied so long and which threatened to overthrow reform, first in the City and then in the Nation.

This requires some explanation. The Big City bears no more relation to the traditional forms of American Government than does the Big Corporation. The men who framed the Constitution were provincial farmers, merchants and lawyers, the largest of whose cities — Philadelphia — was little more than a market-town with sea-port facilities. During the Revolution, these cities had been the centre of the Tories — political, professional and commercial middle-men who banked heavily on British victory. Tammany Hall itself was founded to combat Toryism. The excesses of the Paris mob during the French Revolution reinforced the early American belief that cities were great evils to be prevented at almost any cost. The new capital city of Washington was laid out with an eye to sweeping the streets with artillery in the event of mob-violence. Jefferson and Jackson had established an agrarian policy which assumed the social and moral superiority of the farmer, and most State Constitutions encouraged devices

which, like the Senate of the United States, ensured a political veto-power by the farmers over the industrial workers and city-dwellers.

Nevertheless, Jefferson and Jackson had both guessed wrong. By the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the large American city was the typical and dominant element in the life of the American people. Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Boston, Baltimore, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Kansas City, St. Paul and Minneapolis, New Orleans, Cleveland, Dallas, Seattle, Louisville, Cincinnati and even Washington had shown a continuous social and economic vitality which overgrew the lines of county and state, and exerted a constantly increasing pressure on the institutions of Federal Government.

Of all these cities, New York City was incomparably the greatest, wealthiest and most influential. There were sound reasons for its primacy. Shortly after the Napoleonic Wars, Governor De Witt Clinton had dug the Erie Canal along the upper Hudson and Mohawk Valleys to the Great Lakes, thus outflanking the mountain barrier which fenced the seaboard East from the Great Valley and turning New York into the nation's port of entry. Still later, the railway lines had followed the Canal or had crawled across the Appalachians to the Ohio, to the Mississippi, to the Great Plains, to the Rockies, to the Pacific. The great movement of men and of goods was always East-and-West, although the Continent itself seemed geographically designed for North-and-South communication. Millions of men, tons of material flowed through New York, from and to Europe. The city's location on an island permitted deep-water navigation right to its door-step, in the finest natural harbor on the Atlantic Coast, perhaps in the entire world.

The City grew. It spread out over three States, until the greater metropolitan area included parts of Western Connecti-

cut, Eastern New Jersey, the lower Hudson Valley and Long Island. The City became headquarters for the great banks, the markets and exchanges, the giant corporations, the arts, professions and sciences. Modern high-speed transportation and communication increased its concentrated wealth and power. Its corporate existence was confined to the 299 square miles of the five New York State counties of New York (Manhattan), Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens and Richmond. In these counties were cramped nearly seven million human beings, while within the "Greater New York" area, whose organized existence was blocked by obsolete political arrangements, nearly one-tenth of the inhabitants of the United States made their living.

These inhabitants were, to an ever-increasing extent, the immigrants and the children of the immigrants who had poured into the Western Hemisphere from Ireland and Germany, from Poland, Italy, Austria-Hungary and the Balkans. Just as there had been no place in the American scheme of government for the Big City, so was there no place in American politics for the slum-dwelling citizens. Something had to be invented, and that something proved to be Tammany Hall, the institution which helped take care of the new citizens in meeting the unexpected problems of our urban civilization, in return for their votes. The result was the creation of city machine-politics: a system of strict party discipline combined with self-interested charity, superimposed on the jobs and contracts which were the normal small-change of rural politics. The Tammany pattern was repeated in every major city of the country, but as New York was the greatest of those cities, so was Tammany the greatest of boss-directed urban machines.

The organized political power thus created on the basis of American democracy proved its strength as early as the 1880's, when Lord Bryce described the American Common-

wealth. The great corporations and bankers soon learned to make terms with the city bosses, to take them into informal and profitable partnerships, and to buy their votes when needed. Favors given and favors received was the rule of the machine, and soon there was no real issue between the rulers of Big Business and the rulers of the Big City. As has been already noted, the relationship became so intimate between the two that reform and retrenchment in the nation was invariably matched by reform and retrenchment in the cities, but after every reform wave the bosses and the bankers came back into power and the game went on exactly as before.

Here then was a political province in another dimension than that known to the Federal theory of government, a marvelous city to loot, a city which alternately served and taxed the entire country, a city with a population comparable to that of many European nations, a city with an annual budget of over half a billion dollars, a city whose public service offered political careers as distinguished and useful as those of a foreign country, a city which enjoyed one of the most invigorating climates in the world and whose inhabitants represented the most enterprising members of the vigorous Old World peasantry. It was — and is — one of the most incredible achievements of human civilization and, as such, sets the standards for most of North America and, indeed, for much of the Western World.

When the World Depression struck this City, it came at a time when some of its importance was passing. The immigrant flood had been dammed since 1914 and fifteen years later mass-unemployment in America dried it up to an insignificant trickle. The flood of American goods to Europe, which had been increased by war-loans and post-war bond issues, subsided as Russian, African and South American raw materials began to displace American wheat, meat, timber, copper, petroleum and cotton. The trend toward American self-

containment began to increase the relative importance of Chicago, New Orleans, San Francisco, and Seattle, and the Big City itself was subjected to the most searching of all criticisms: economic necessity.

The emergency was far greater than Tammany's haphazard "charity" could meet. Moreover, Tammany had been looting New York under the shadow of Big Business and therefore found itself increasingly discredited. When Al Smith had drafted Franklin Roosevelt to run for Governor of New York State in 1928, Roosevelt had been elected where Smith had failed to carry his native State against Herbert Hoover. Roosevelt, not unreasonably, interpreted this as a mandate to dispense with the Smith-Tammany control of the State's Democratic Administration. Even before the Stock Market Crash of 1929, a tension had developed between Smith and Roosevelt which was to have historic consequences. For Tammany's dapper Mayor, Jimmy Walker, was in a highly vulnerable position. At first, the tension was masked behind false smiles. Then in 1930, with Roosevelt a candidate to succeed himself, Smith came out in opposition to Roosevelt's State Conservation program. The program was over-whelmingly endorsed by the voters and Roosevelt returned to the Governor's Mansion at Albany with a majority which made him "available" for the Presidency.

To secure the Democratic nomination in 1932, however, Roosevelt needed the support of the West and the South, sections of the country which had been made unpleasantly conscious of Tammany by the "bigotry campaign" of 1928. Roosevelt's problem was to break with Tammany, without violating the rule of Party regularity which is basic in American machine-politics. This was done in 1931 by the passage of the Hofstadter Act, authorizing a joint legislative committee to investigate the government of New York City. The actual investigation was conducted by its counsel Samuel Seabury.

This investigation was possible only as a result of Assemblyman Langdon W. Post's action in casting the deciding vote. Post was a Tammany-elected man but was close to Governor Roosevelt. Tammany knifed Post at the election of 1932, Roosevelt made him Assistant Relief Administrator, La-Guardia eventually made him Tenement Commissioner.

The Seabury Investigation began its hearings and turned up evidence which made it increasingly difficult — in the then mood of the voters — to justify Walker's continuance in office. The Mayor himself had marital troubles which added to Tammany's difficulties with the Puritanical (in matters matrimonial) Irish Catholic voters. Seabury had been approaching the Tammany machine for two years before the climax. He had investigated the magistrates courts and uncovered a vice ring which blackmailed and framed innocent women. Two Tammany judges were ousted, three resigned rather than face the music, one — Judge Crater — disappeared so completely as to recall the still unsolved Rothstein murder of 1928. Seabury then toyed with the conduct of Tammany's District Attorney Crain, submitted a report censuring, and finally, as chief counsel of the Hofstadter Joint Legislative Committee, he got after Walker. Shortly before the Democratic National Convention, Walker was called to the stand and Roosevelt's lieutenants could present the Governor as a man who had fought the hated Tammany and still not "betrayed" the Democratic Party. Three months later, Walker — America's "Prince of Wales" as he was then called — resigned as Mayor and sailed for Europe, to get a divorce, marry the woman he loved and abandon politics, much like another illustrious exile four years later.

While this slow-motion duel continued with Tammany, Roosevelt had devoted his time to a program of astute political showmanship, in the matter of conservation, water-power, and participation in Governors' Conferences, calculated to

impress the West with the fact that Roosevelt thought in terms of Progressive principles and policies. It was an instructive example.

Even so, the fight was close, as Tammany and the Wall Street Democrats, shepherded by Mr. Bernard M. Baruch, endeavored to create a combination which would put a "safe" man into what promised to be the Presidency. They failed and Roosevelt was elected, with no thanks to either Tammany or Wall Street. That, of course, was the same year that Tammany punished Langdon Post, and money beat LaGuardia.

In the meantime, the affairs of the City had gone from bad to worse. Walker's departure had left the President of the Board of Aldermen, Joseph V. McKee, in the position of Acting Mayor. He was a Democrat, but not a Tammany Democrat, and he worked hard to give the city an honest and efficient administration. But Tammany either could not or would not learn. During the New Deal election they put up Probate Judge John P. O'Brien to serve as Mayor during the balance of Walker's term and dropped McKee — "Holy Joe", they called him, in derision for his reformist tendencies — like a hot cake. Even so, 125,000 voters wrote in McKee's name on their ballots. Of O'Brien's term it is enough to say that it seemed to reflect the indecision of a stupid, frightened, old man. The relief problem clamored for attention. O'Brien first threatened to tax the Stock Exchange and then borrowed money for relief. The stage had been reached when the richest city in the richest country in the world could barely meet its obligations, let alone finance the needs of the emergency.

The situation was made to order for LaGuardia. Defeated in Congress, he was now the only man available for New York's Mayoralty. Langdon Post resigned from the Relief Administration and hurried up to New York to make a bid for the Fusion nomination, but quickly trimmed his ambitions and ran for Borough President of Manhattan on the Fusion

Ticket which was organized to combat Tammany's candidate — Judge O'Brien. The 1932 election had made a clean sweep. Hoover, Mills, Hilles and the ancient Republican Party bosses had been politically discredited by the Roosevelt landslide and by the closing of all the banks in March, 1933. The New Deal had got off to a tremendous start at Washington and, for the moment, both Big Business and Boss Politics were at a loss. The Republican organization in New York County ousted the veteran Sam Koenig and selected Chase Mellen, a sensitive, high-minded and responsible young man, as County Chairman. (Mellen was to be ousted by the Joe Baldwin-Kenneth Simpson combination before the 1936 election). LaGuardia got the Republican endorsement in the holy name of "good government". It looked like another lost cause, for the Democrats outnumbered the Republicans three-to-one.

Then the Roosevelt Administration came to LaGuardia's aid. The anti-Tammany, pro-Roosevelt Democratic boss of the Bronx promoted the independent candidacy of "Holy Joe" McKee on a new-laid "Recovery Party" ticket. This split the normal New York City Democratic plurality of half a million votes and threw the election to LaGuardia. Once again Roosevelt had administered a thrashing to Tammany, without formally abandoning the Democratic Party and had made possible a New Deal type of City Administration.

This was a matter which had already given the Republicans some concern. Roosevelt was riding high, wide and handsome at Washington, with N.R.A. and A.A.A. and T.V.A. and other popular emergency measures for recovery and reform. His was incomparably the most popular Administration the country had known since the days of Andrew Jackson — more so, in that the conservatives had come so close to disaster that they had neither the will nor the strength to oppose the Roosevelt policies. But the G.O.P. had a long memory and had taken bad beatings before 1932 and it seemed scarcely

credible that the 1932 landslide would be followed by still greater Roosevelt landslides in 1934 and 1936. Under the old pattern of politics, Roosevelt would barely hold his strength in 1934 and would be lucky to be reelected by a narrow margin in 1936.

In the meantime, the New York Republicans wanted an honest, efficient, non-partisan City Administration, and this LaGuardia had pledged to them. He not only pledged it; he threatened them with it! He said he would not appoint a single Republican for political reasons. He said that he knew he had been selected, not for his political virtues but for his "vices" — as a result of a reputation for liberalism and non-partisanship which would appeal to the masses of the voters. He still stood where he had stood in 1929 and proposed to clean up the City, to eliminate graft and waste, to promote parks and playgrounds, to handle the transit problem on a business basis, to promote low-cost housing for the City's masses, to rehabilitate the City's credit: in other words, LaGuardia proposed to run the City on a sound "house-keeping" basis and not to use the City Hall as a means of conferring favors and privileges to economic and political insiders. It was — and is — the only basis on which a large American city can be governed with any due regard for our professed standard of ethics.

This was entirely satisfactory to the Republicans in principle, but they were worried in practice. They exacted a pledge from LaGuardia that he would be completely non-partisan and that, in particular, he should not support the Democratic Party candidates in state or national elections. This was not difficult for LaGuardia to promise at the time, since he not only foresaw but publicly prophesied a realignment of political parties which would make the terms Republican and Democrat entirely meaningless and would lead to a division between conservative and liberal, in which he and his fellow-progressives proposed to be on the liberal side.

Under these auspices, then, the Little Flower got off to a magnificent start. He enjoyed the blessing of the conservative Republicans, including Col. Henry L. Stimson, Hoover's luckless Secretary of State, and of the newly organized Fusion Party. The Socialists stupidly withheld their endorsement. McKee made a spectacular fight, O'Brien never had a chance. The result was: LaGuardia, 858,551; McKee, 604,405; and O'Brien, 586,100. The Socialist candidate received only 63,450 ballots. LaGuardia had a plurality of 262,431 votes out of a total of 2,112,146, having carried every borough with a bare 40% of the electorate behind him. (Incidentally, this was about the same proportion of votes which had elected Lincoln in 1860, and Wilson in 1912). This modified his position from the start, for though more than half of his strength came from the Republicans, it was clear that what had elected him was Roosevelt's foresight in using McKee to split the Democratic majority. The G.O.P. had given him 445,954 votes, but McKee had subtracted 604,405 Democratic votes from Tammany. The significance of this equation seemed to escape the Republicans, who acted for the next four years as though LaGuardia were their own political property and honest city government their own invention.

At last after twenty years of fighting, the son of the Italian band-master of the 11th U. S. Infantry had made himself Chief Magistrate of the most extraordinary metropolis in the world. Tammany went down fighting and retained possession of the Borough Presidency of Manhattan and of many of the Board of Aldermen, but on the whole it was a famous victory, and New York sat back to see what would happen.

It was a strange moment in history. Earlier in the year, much to the dismay of the Berlin correspondents of American newspapers and leaders of the Jewish community throughout the world, Adolf Hitler had become Chancellor of Germany and had followed his elevation by a general election which

gave his Brown-Shirt Revolution a mandate to make over the Reich. General De Bono was already supervising the shipment of men and materials to East Africa in secret preparation for a military offensive against the Abyssinian Empire. In the Spanish Republic, the conservative land-owners, clergy and Army officers were organizing a political reaction to take over the Government and put a stop to the liberal reforms which had begun two years earlier. The World Economic Conference at London, designed to revive world trade and to restore the old international banking system which had collapsed when England abandoned the Gold Standard, had broken down, and with it had disappeared the hope that New York could restore its old prosperity by the old easy methods of banking manipulation.

And LaGuardia had embarked on a course of municipal reform which had proved to be political suicide for every previous Mayor of New York who had attempted it. The task of making good government as congenial as greed, and reform as romantic as rascality seemed hopeless. LaGuardia himself declared that he did not expect to survive politically. In this statement, he was something less than candid. For Roosevelt's national administration was changing the "moral climate" of America and Fiorello himself was openly gambling on a realignment of parties and a redistribution of policies which would enable the process to be continued for a generation.

II

His first and his hardest problem was to dramatize reform, to give the people a spectacle of a new broom making a clean sweep of old abuses, to give the "good government" crowd the best possible run for their professed principles.

Just as Roosevelt tried to give Americans a sense of national unity, so LaGuardia tried to give the New Yorkers a vision of their city as a whole. On his induction into office on January

1, 1934, he proposed to do more than rebuild the structure of City government, wipe out county lines, consolidate departments, and abolish useless jobs. He proposed to abolish the city's slums with aid of Federal funds, to clean up the open-air pushcart markets, to make the streets more attractive, to improve piers and airport facilities, to create a "free port" on Staten Island, to build beer-gardens along the Harlem River, to foster music and art — to apply, in short, the same principles of civic administration which had made the cities of Central Europe among the finest and happiest in the world.

In an inaugural broadcast over the National Broadcasting Company facilities he repeated the "oath of the young men of Athens", as an expression of his duty and determination: "We will never bring disgrace to this, our city, by any act of dishonesty or cowardice nor ever desert our suffering comrades in the ranks. We will fight for our ideals and sacred things of the city, both alone and with many. We will revere and obey the city's laws and do our best to incite a like respect in those above us and who are prone to annul them and set them at naught. We will strive unceasingly to quicken the public sense of civic duty. Thus in all these ways we will transmit this city not only less but far greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us."

He conceived then — as now — the City's four greatest problems to be finance, housing, transit and art. The latter was a new element in America's conscious public life and it is a tribute to municipal vitality that where the Roosevelt Administration faltered and fumbled between basket-weaving, handicraft, Gyfte Shoppe "boon-doggling" and the fear of Congress, LaGuardia's constituents have welcomed all his efforts to enrich their personal lives by cultivating art, music, parks, playgrounds, beer-gardens, side-walk cafés, leisure, museums and other attributes of "the more abundant life".

So it is not surprising to discover that one of the New

Broom's first sweeps was to propose a separate high school for pupils who showed a talent for music and art, instead of trying to give all high school students a smattering, while his second move was to urge revision of New York's Charter, which he described as "a Horse Car Charter in an Airplane Age", predicting that the politicians of both parties would make a desperate effort to defeat revision and that both Republican and Democratic politicians would combine in the 1937 election to prevent the continuance of non-partisan city government as exemplified by his administration. This prophesy was made in February of 1934.

At the outset, he planned to finance his program by taxing the few for the benefit of the many. By grace of an ennobling act by the Legislature at Albany, the city was allowed to extend its taxing power to the same categories as the State. The Little Flower promptly clapped down city income and inheritance taxes. The horrified bankers rushed to Governor Lehmann, himself an ex-banker, and explained that this would never do. The bill was repealed *retroactively* — with no annoying publicity — and LaGuardia was compelled to raise funds for his program by the same sort of sales tax which he had defeated at Washington a couple of years earlier.

So far as the public was allowed to see, however, he was in the honeymoon period of a new political administration. "Good government" always makes good reading at first and he used his opportunity to win expression for his long-range views. He condemned boss-politics, saying that many New Yorkers honestly believed that John F. Curry, the Tammany leader, was the real ruler of the city: "I do not want the politician — and when I say politician I am using the term in the worst sense — I do not want him to stand between the people and their duly elected representatives. . . . My eyes are open to the dangerous position in which I am putting myself when I fail to recognize the demands of the bosses. They are going to

fight for their lives. But I am going to fight for the life of the city . . . I am not sure that the people are ready to discard the dangerous middleman in the shape of the professional politician. I am not sure that they are willing to ignore the district leader and the political boss. I am going to try to give them a government by the people and for the people, but I am fully aware that in endeavoring to do this I am committing political suicide. If I succeed in making this city a better place in which to live, I shall feel that the result justifies the sacrifice."

The New Broom proposed to abolish Tammany methods, including the possibility of a permanent Fusion Party which might in time become another Tammany. LaGuardia proposed to make public service a career and to break with politicians. No other reformer or crusader in American history had advanced such a proposition: Bryan had always been a "good Democrat", T. R. was "regular" except when the Republican bosses refused to give him his own way. LaGuardia was making a big gamble that Charles F. Murphy, Tammany's greatest boss, had been right. Back in the first Hylan Administration, Fiorello had confessed to Murphy that he didn't get along very well with his Party leaders. "Keep on that way!" Murphy advised. "Times are changing in that respect."

The New Broom kept on sweeping. When a surprise visit to the Transit Commission discovered only a few of the 328 employes on duty, LaGuardia urged the Commission's abolition, with a transfer of its duties to the Public Service Commission and Board of Transportation. He abolished the Crime Prevention Bureau of the Police Department, much to liberal surprise, when he discovered that it was simply engaged in incompetent propaganda. He surprised a meeting of the Sinking Fund Commission by declaring that lawyers had done more to retard civilization than cancer and smallpox. . . . He addressed the Italian Dressmakers Union at the Hippodrome

during a performance of "Pagliacci", and lectured to New York University's students of government. When he found that the Mayor's official automobile was out of order, he cracked at Tammany: "They didn't even leave the Mayor a good car. They left demoralized departments, shaken confidence, impaired credit, disorganized institutions, political contracts, jails and worn-out cars — but even that can't hold us down." He added that he could supply the city with a good symphony orchestra for the same amount spent to maintain jazz bands at the swank Central Park Casino and the Claremont Inn — an excellent example of his ability to dramatise the possibilities of "the more abundant life".

He gave the impression of tremendous sincerity when he told a reporter that "I want to build the healthiest city in the world, to wipe out tuberculosis and other diseases, to give people clean streets. It can be done. I want to improve the hospitals and establish in New York the greatest medical center in the world.

"I want to improve the parks, to make New York beautiful, to give people something which will not only be of recreational value but also be esthetically stimulating . . .

"I want to accomplish adequate housing for the wage earners . . . I want to have some real markets which will decrease the cost of distribution and the price of food by at least 10% . . .

"We must restore the supremacy of New York as a seaport. Everybody notices our skyscrapers but few ever think of the docks . . . Docks neglected, skyscrapers empty.

"You know I am in the position of an artist or a sculptor. I can see New York as it should be and as it can be if we all work together. But now I am like the man who has a conception that he wishes to carve or paint, who has the model before him, but hasn't a chisel or a brush."

In spite of his feeling of inadequacy, he had already done a

tremendous job within the first six months of his administration. The "good government" boys had got their satisfaction. He listed fifteen points of progress at that time — a record which compared with the Roosevelt record at Washington:

(1) Improved city credit from a 4% interest rate on short term borrowings to $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1%, plus an improvement in city bonds from 82 to above par.

(2) Expansion of city relief to include clothing for 165,000 families on home relief, as well as 140,000 individuals on 522 Federal work relief projects.

(3) The budget deficit of \$31,000,000 wiped out by means of business and public utility tax receipts.

(4) Centralized city purchases with subsequent savings in personnel and costs, amounting to \$1,000,000 a year on coal-costs alone.

(5) Reorganization of city departments along non-political lines which checked graft and cut costs, by as much as 58% in the case of the Sanitation Department.

(6) Expansion of city parks, opening of 375 playgrounds, reduction of traffic accidents to children.

(7) Reorganization of the Hospital Department with its 26 hospitals, and annual budget of over \$32,000,000.

(8) Reorganization of the Health Department, Federal loans to build nine new health centers and a research laboratory.

(9) Establishment of a city distributing system of milk to the poor at 8 cents a quart in the face of an increase in milk prices.

(10) Plans to raise four and a half million dollars a month from current revenue to meet relief costs without borrowing.

(11) Development of New York as a seaport by a 20% reduction in pier rentals.

(12) The abolition of racketeering in the City's public markets and the sale of ice.

(13) Reduction of the fees paid by the city to workmen's compensation physicians from 43% to 6% of the total payments made for injured employees.

(14) Reduction of the non-budgetary city rentals by \$531,000.

(15) Preparation of plans for expanding the city water supply to meet the 1944 requirements.

After two years of office, he issued a new form of municipal report, *New York Advancing: A Scientific Approach to Municipal Government*, which opened with the statement: "To the victor belongs the responsibility for good government". In this he listed the results of the first half of his four-year term: extension of civil service, divorcing the police from politics, appointment of good men to the bench, great savings in the Law Department, balancing the budget under Comptroller McGoldrick, completion of the City's subway system, reduction of interest, economies in administration, city bond's selling at 121, increased tax values, centralized purchases with consequent savings, \$66,000,000 a year on relief from city revenue, improvement of piers, airport plans, plans for subway unification, cleaning out the racketeers in ice, fish, vegetables, completion of the Bronx Terminal Market, promotion of the World's Fair, special aid for children, slum-clearance and low-cost housing built with Federal funds, improved hospitals and prisons, enlarged cultural activities, scientific police work, better sewage disposal and street-cleaning methods, new fire-fighting equipment, planning for charter revision, for low-cost housing, for a municipally operated power plant, and for the establishment of a municipal art center, including an opera house, a symphonic concert hall and city auditorium. He even found time to say a kind word for the Board of Aldermen: "Considering that (it) is almost entirely one party, and making due allowance for politics in such a body, the Board to date has been helpful and co-operative to a most gratifying

degree. They deserve mention for their co-operation in legislation carried on in a business-like and efficient manner." As he told a reporter who asked him why he didn't bark at the politicians the way he used to in the days of Hylan and Craig: "You don't need to bark when you're in a majority!"

But his political honeymoon was coming to an end. In order to reduce the city's electric bills he had threatened to build a municipal powerhouse. As Roosevelt had discovered years before, public utilities are super-sensitive to the "yardstick". By January 1935, the sedate *New York Times* observed of the reform-Mayor: "He has said some foolish things and done many wise ones, but has unfortunately too often given the impression of being a restless and undecided man, fond of toying with haphazard proposals that may be benevolent in intention but are dangerous or impossible in practice. He seems always to want to have in hand some socialistic plaything or other. Just now it is a municipal power plant . . ." In due time, the Tammany Board of Aldermen was to make this sacrilege impossible, by an adverse vote, after the Federal Government had offered to lend the City the money needed to complete the "socialistic" proposal that the municipal administration should manufacture electricity to meet its own requirements.

The New Broom was meeting with obstructions now and was not sweeping quite so cleanly. He continued to break through on the cultural front, giving a trophy for the Boy's City-Wide Music Tournament, supervised by the Department of Plants & Structures. The Flatbush Boys Club won the silver cup after a four-months competition among the children of the under-privileged. Music is sufficiently alien to the Nordic rulers of the nation for them to perceive no real challenge in these harmless activities of a "temperamental Italian". It will be interesting to learn whether the old adage about song-writing and law-making holds true in America's largest city.

Rumblings of discontent were arising from the starving politicians. The Mayor had — rather to everyone's surprise — kept his word about not appointing Republicans to office for political reasons. He had gone further and hired out-of-town experts wherever he felt them needed. This aroused Tammany's ire at carpet-baggers. As a matter of fact, there were only four "aliens" who held important positions with the Fusion Administration: William Hodson, Commissioner of Public Welfare; Dr. John L. Rice, Commissioner of Health; A. H. MacCormick, Commissioner of Correction; and Miss Charlotte E. Carr, Executive Director of the Emergency Relief Bureau. And Mr. Melvin C. Eaton, the Republican State Chairman, complained: "I realize, my friends, that New York Republicans are just as much handicapped by the lack of patronage today as they would be were a Democratic administration in control of the city." The Little Flower's riposte was to compel seventeen of his principal appointees to resign party jobs, most of them on the Republican County Committee of Manhattan, thereby causing intense resentment among the G.O.P., which was already gathering its strength for Landon's expected march on Washington.

The year 1935 ended in a strangely mixed political atmosphere. On a bitter December day the Mayor formally opened "First Houses" — low-cost dwellings constructed with P.W.A. money from Washington. "This," said he, "is the first time that a housing unit has been constructed by the Federal Government. A great constitutional lawyer two years ago told me that it would be a cold day when the government builds houses. Well, he was right that time — the first time a constitutional lawyer has been right in the past three years." A little later he spoke at a mass meeting in Madison Square Garden to raise \$500,000 for the Italian Red Cross work in Ethiopia, despite the protests of Norman Thomas and other critics of Italian imperialism. With lofty indignation, the

Mayor pleaded that New York City should not become "the battleground of racial antagonisms!"

So ended LaGuardia's first two years in the City Hall. They were years of achievement and years of struggle. He had operated in an atmosphere of intense controversy, almost from the start, with strikes, snow-removal crises, and difficulties which he was unable to solve by the magic-wand monetary largess of the Roosevelt Administration. They were years which had seen changes in his administration. The Fusion Comptroller, W. Arthur Cunningham, had died in office and had been replaced by Joe McGoldrick, but in a special election in 1934, a Tammany candidate for the Comptrollership had been buoyed up by the heavy vote for Governor Lehman, who was then regarded as a pillar of the New Deal. McGoldrick lost by a few thousand ballots in a tremendous turnout, and a year later Tammany recovered control of the Board of Aldermen in time to block the Mayor's efforts to erect an electric-power "yard-stick" in the City. They were years to his credit and to the advantage of his city.

They were also years which revealed the limitations of his character as a political administrator. This was the first time in his twenty years of public life when he had been directly charged with the execution of policies and the direction of a large organization. He was energetic, industrious, ubiquitous, tireless. He was also short-tempered, cranky, intolerant of criticism, bossy — one of the world's most difficult men to work under, with or for. He got the reputation at the City Hall of being angry, arbitrary, and autocratic — a reputation which does not seem to blend rationally with democratic institutions. Part of it was showmanship, no doubt, but more of it came from an exaggerated sense of civic responsibility. When an over-worked member of his staff resigned, LaGuardia refused to accept his resignation. When the individual followed his resignation by not coming to work, LaGuardia telephoned

him and cursed him so roundly that he shamed the man into continuing his job. This to LaGuardia's credit. He angrily refused a campaign worker the loan of a city automobile to take calling on his girl in the Bronx, and Mrs. LaGuardia explained to the disheartened youth that the Mayor never let her use a city automobile for her shopping. This also to his credit. Less to his credit was the petty bullying and snapping at his willing aides in the City Hall and his tendency to deal out insult and vituperation to those who earned his displeasure.

In this he provides a contrast to the two heroes of his present-day politics: LaFollette — like LaGuardia of Latin blood with a Western background — and Roosevelt, the solid Dutch squire of Hyde Park. He has overlooked the fact that there is an appeal in a calm, good-tempered, steady determination to win, which carries farther than the superlatives and shriek-marks of metropolitan journalism.

His avowed hatred for political organization seemed also to be a defect in his character, suggesting a lack of knowledge of human nature. People who must earn their daily bread cannot afford to keep themselves at fever-heat for political purposes. Those popular desires and needs which can be met only through political action, cannot safely be entrusted to individual office-holders who may change their minds to match their interests. In democratic practice, political parties form themselves around certain types of policy and execute them, become corrupt and are then removed by other parties, which in turn become corrupt. It is useless to complain of the party, when it is the corruption you deplore. The Mayor's failure to cement his Fusion organization in New York City seemed to spring from principle rather than expediency, but since this failure threatened to lead to the reversal of his program it was hardly rational. Neither LaFollette nor Roosevelt made the mistake of ignoring the scaffolding which must support any political reform. In fairness to his quality as an

administrator, should be recorded LaGuardia's ability to go along with strong and self-willed men like Bob Moses, who supervised the construction of the new system of parks and playgrounds in which the Mayor takes the greatest pride, and Secretary Ickes at Washington who controlled the allotment of the P.W.A. grants which made possible the major housing and construction enterprises in the city. Perhaps LaGuardia, like many Englishmen, does not treat you like an equal until you have shown an ability to be tough, fearless and independent. If so, he has earned the right.

The truth seems to be that Fiorello LaGuardia is afflicted with that noble disease of the mind: an artistic temperament. His principles and policies are those of a Western Progressive; his personal methods are often those of a prima donna, an exhibitionist, a virtuoso, a political Heifetz, an administrative Gershwin — tending to sacrifice everything to the demands of the particular audience, often creating future difficulties for himself and his political purposes by adopting the slogan: "The show must go on!" It is an amazingly versatile performance, but it would be helped by occasional intermissions.

III

What had happened, of course, was that the Republicans had given Mayor LaGuardia a perfectly impossible political assignment.

Here was he — a "Western" Progressive by background, conviction, and prolonged association — elected as Mayor of New York City in a general progressive movement which included the New Deal Administration at Washington. The New Deal was nominally Democratic, but the Progressive Republicans of the West — Fiorello's friends and political heroes: George Norris, Bob LaFollette, Hiram Johnson, Bronson Cutting — were working with Roosevelt and had ignored Party ties in order to give America the practical

reforms in which they and their followers firmly believed.

The New Deal at New York was not even nominally Republican and LaGuardia's Republicanism was even more tenuous than that of the Westerners with whom he had trained at Washington. Yet he was under an obligation to avoid anything which could be labeled "political" and at the same time to obtain from Washington all the relief and grants which would enable New York City to "balance" its budgets without levying additional taxes on the corporate wealth of the metropolis. He was expected to give the city "good government" at the expense of the New Deal but not to give the New Deal credit or support for its services to the city. It was a preposterous situation and one which could have occurred only to the muscle-bound stupidity of the Republican Old Guard.

LaGuardia did his best to perform the impossible. His hectic showmanship and his occasional snarling bad temper may all have been due to the difficulty of the task of staging a New Deal and pretending that it was only old-fashioned municipal reform.

He adopted the device first employed by Theodore Roosevelt as Police Commissioner, two generations before, of conducting himself like the Caliph of Baghdad-on-the-Subway, making unpredictable personal appearances in the guise of Haroun-el-Raschid, dispensing justice and mercy with dramatic promptitude. At the same time, as already described, he was giving New York a non-partisan, non-political administration — giving until it hurt the Republicans.

The lofty purity of the "oath of the young men of Athens" was one thing, but political showmanship another. His personal visit to the Transit Commission in the second month of his Administration was only one of many activities on a full-time job. At first, he tried to keep his evenings free, telling a reporter who asked him if he had to attend any functions one evening: "No, I'm going home, have something to eat, read a little, and by 10 I'll be in bed. Being Mayor in the daytime is

a man's sized job. I shall cut out all public dinners, and even smokers. Sometimes I shall go to a concert, sometimes to the theatre, but not often. Most nights will see me in bed early, getting ready for the next day's work."

But since New York — or a large part of it — only begins to live after dark, this routine proved impossible. The Mayor soon entered the spirit of the game he had set himself. He sat as a "committing magistrate" a number of times, in order to sentence offenders and deliver attacks on the slot-machine racketeers, in order to spur the police and enlist public opinion against this cheap cheat. He personally supervised the smashing of these gambling devices and the dumping of them at sea — much as Prohibition Enforcement officers had formerly destroyed illicit liquor.

His ubiquity suggested that of Mrs. Roosevelt herself but, like most people of Latin blood, he was averse to capitalizing his family. His wife kept out of the news, dressed and conducted herself as inconspicuously as she had done before his election, and the only "personal" item which appeared was the announcement in May, 1934, that she and the Mayor had completed the adoption of two children, Jean, a 6-year old girl who was a niece of the Mayor's first wife, and Eric, a boy of Swedish parentage, who was then nearly four. LaGuardia's showmanship centered upon himself, in relation to public policies of the City Administration. For example, he allowed it to be published that his new stream-lined limousine carried a loaded pistol in a specially-made pocket which could be reached by either the Mayor or his chauffeur. The pocket had been built in the Fire Department shops, which had also installed a folding desk used by the Mayor to open his mail as he drove downtown. Both Mayor and chauffeur had pistol-permits, it was announced, and the pistol allowed the plain clothes detectives assigned to protect his safety to be released for other duties.

In March, 1934, LaGuardia intervened with the Bellevue Hospital Medical Board to secure the assignment of a neighbor's daughter, a medical assistant, to the surgical staff. Her work warranted it, but the Board had never appointed a woman to surgical work. The Mayor said, publicly, that he failed to "see why a woman cannot be a good surgeon. How can we develop women as surgeons if they are barred by such rules?" It was good feminism, good sense, good politics, good "news". He turned his bad temper to good advantage when Dr. John L. Tildsley, Assistant Superintendent of the Board of Education, criticized the great LaGuardia budget-balancing act. The Mayor burst out with inexcusable violence and uttered needless and offensive remarks against Dr. Tildsley. The next day he made a public apology to the man he had insulted — good "news" and again good politics.

There was more than a touch of the Caliph in his giving a job to the great negro boxer, Sam Langford, who had been seriously injured by an unknown hit-and-run automobile driver in New York City, and turned up broke and almost blind at the City Hall. At the beginning of his third year of office, he was interviewed on his political chances for reelection and said: "I am reasonably certain of one thing: When it's time for me to step down, the people will say, 'Well, the little fellow played square.'" It is not a bad political reputation for a politician — or a statesman — to have. Tom Johnson of Cleveland, the greatest single reform Mayor the country has produced, had such a reputation. LaGuardia used his reputation for fairness in conciliating industrial disputes in the dress industry, among the elevator and building service employees, in the garment and fur area.

On and on it went. One day, the Mayor was lunching with more than a hundred American aviators who had trained with him at Foggia, Italy, during the World War. Again, he was seen piloting an airplane with such success that he qual-

ified for a private pilot's license. Another day, he conducted the prize-winning Joliet Township High School Band at the City Hall, and said it was the finest of its kind he had ever heard. Still later he issued a summons, in his capacity as chief magistrate of the city, alleging criminal libel against a certain Robert E. Edmondson, who was disseminating anti-Jewish literature, and incidentally defaming Roosevelt, Frankfurter, Landon, Senator Borah and Miss Frances Perkins. For this gesture he received the 1936 American Hebrew Medal for promoting better understanding between Jew and Christian.

New York saw its stocky little Mayor in many places and poses. He opened a big Harlem swimming-pool with facilities for 1,450 bathers. He hired sixteen city high school students to study city government in summer jobs as part of their preparation for a career. He was nearly always to be found at concerts: at Carnegie Hall during the Philharmonic season, at the Lewisohn Stadium during the summer. One night on his way to a concert he turned aside to answer a radio alarm calling police to a Harlem street-shooting. He spent an hour and a half at the scene of the crime and earned much publicity. After this he made a practice of keeping a police radio tuned in at all times, in his home and in his car. He was always rushing to the "X" which marked the spot — to elevated railroad wrecks, roof-collapse accidents, hold-ups. In one case he arrived on the scene almost as soon as the police themselves. When his official limousine was laid up for repairs, he roared around in the side-car of a police motorcycle.

This whole part of his career was in the strenuous-life tradition of the first Roosevelt. For example, Roosevelt had invited Dr. Booker T. Washington, the famous Negro educator, to the White House. LaGuardia named a negro as City Magistrate, the first of the colored race to be raised to the City Bench. It was good politics, and good government, too, for the appointee was a graduate of Harvard with a Columbia law

degree, a former Deputy Attorney-General, a Catholic and a 4th degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

One bright autumn day in 1936, LaGuardia led a procession of fourteen city cars in a whirlwind inspection tour of 105 motion picture theatres in Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, to see whether they were complying with a recent regulation to give children a section of the theatre by themselves, with a matron in attendance. A few months later, Mr. B. P. Stoianovitch, the Consul-General of Yugoslavia in New York, reported that the Mayor had received him and talked with him in fluent and correct Serbian! A versatile man! The Mayor appointed a Committee to conduct a contest for a song which "must reflect the spirit of New York City and be worthy of being selected as the city's official song." The Mayor congratulated the half thousand graduates of the Central Needle Trades High School upon having taken the trade school course, saying "a first-class tailor is worth a great deal more to the community than a third-class lawyer." The Mayor received a plaque for this, an award for that; a "Serenade" was dedicated to him, and so forth and so on.

It was an exciting, tingling, colorful performance, almost as good as the New Deal show at Washington, but not all the showmanship in the Mayor's bag of tricks could conceal the fact that the Fusion Administration at New York was part and parcel of the Roosevelt-Progressive coalition in control of the national government.

The Mayor's own record was against the simple-minded Republican notion that the two could be kept in water-tight compartments in the public mind. He had played too large a part in preparing for many of the New Deal measures at Washington for New Yorkers to separate the two administrations. In a pre-election newspaper article, LaGuardia had been given credit for the following measures, as an argument in his favor:

(1) In June, 1932, he had urged that the lending power of the R.F.C. be broadened to permit loans to sound new ventures to promote re-employment, including loans for low-cost housing.

(2) In the same month, he sought an appropriation of \$100,000,000 for public works to promote employment, both directly in construction and indirectly in the manufacture of needed materials.

(3) On December 21, 1931, he had urged the five-day week to put two million persons back to work.

(4) On February 27, 1931, and on other occasions, he has supported the Wagner unemployment bill.

(5) On April 27, 1924, he had condemned child labor, he had been an ardent supporter of the Child Labor Amendment, and had sought the creation of a Federal Children's Relief Board.

(6) On January 4, 1932, he had introduced a bill providing for the guarantee of deposits in national banks and other Federal Reserve System members, through a government-operated system of coöperative insurance.

(7) On July 12, 1919, he had opposed the Eighteenth Amendment and had backed all moves since that time for its repeal or modification.

(8) On February 18, 1933, he had introduced a bill to create a Farm and Home Credit Bank, with capital stock of \$200,000,000 subscribed by the government to refinance safe farm mortgages at not more than 3% interest.

(9) He had introduced bills on November 21, 1929, and December 8, 1931, to regulate interstate transactions in securities unless backed by issuing or selling bankers to guarantee principal and interest.

(10) On January 27, 1925, he had announced his support of immediate government operation of Muscle Shoals to provide cheap power.

The record ran that he was a member of the pre-Brain Trust, sought out by Adolph A. Berle, Jr., acting for President Roosevelt (Berle whom LaGuardia later made his City Chamberlain to draw up plans for transit unification and Charter revision), during the 1932-33 session to sponsor needed farm and railroad bankruptcy laws, which were signed by Herbert Hoover on March 3, 1933. Berle, Julius B. Eastman and LaGuardia had coöperated in writing the railroad reorganization bill. There was no doubt of LaGuardia's intimate if informal coöperation with the President-elect during the dangerous period of "interregnum" between the election of 1932 and Inauguration Day on March 4, 1933.

Nor was it a secret that Fusion owed its victory more to the decoy McKee campaign on the Recovery Party ticket than to the New York Republicans themselves. The prompt association of Berle with the LaGuardia Administration and the intervention of Moley during the campaign suggested a large degree of quiet pre-arrangement between Fusion and the White House. Their community of New Deal interest was too obvious to be overlooked. Roosevelt was still engaged in his duel against Al Smith, Tammany and the Wall Street Democrats, which was to culminate in Smith's "taking a walk" in the 1936 campaign, the fostering of "Jeffersonian Democrats" by the DuPonts in 1936, and the creation in 1937 of Southern Conservative revolt by the more adroit Baruch-Johnson-Swope combination. Roosevelt used LaGuardia to weaken and discredit Tammany; LaGuardia used Roosevelt and the Republicans for the same purpose.

It was also no secret that New Deal "free-spending" was used to strengthen the LaGuardia régime and to embitter the "starving" Tammany outfit. As previously described, LaGuardia had been forced, ironically enough, to levy a city sales tax to support home relief, after his success in defeating the national sales tax. The millions thus raised were reinforced

by generous outpourings from the F.E.R.A., the Civil Works Administration and the Works Progress Administration. Beautiful parks, playgrounds and swimming-pools arose in the wake of this wave of "stage money". LaGuardia's Western Progressive affiliations helped him get millions upon millions more from Harold Ickes' Public Works Administration. He got the money to buy rolling stock and equipment for the independent subway system, to build the Mid-Town tunnel, the Triborough Bridge and other great municipal improvements including the tremendous Williamsburgh Housing project. He even got the money from Ickes to build the city a power-station, but the Tammany Board of Aldermen, as has been noted, rejected this proposition. The electric utilities, like the Supreme Court, were still in the "untouchable" class.

After a while, it became impossible to distinguish between the New Deal at Washington and the New Deal in New York City, and the New York Republican organization demanded patronage and accused the Mayor of playing national New Deal politics, in violation of his pledge of non-partisanship.

It was a bargain no man in LaGuardia's position could have kept. The politics of the New Deal were creating currents of opinion and of interest which could not be ignored by any responsible city administrator. The New Deal had paid particular attention to the cultivation of the Catholic vote — and New York is a great Catholic city; to the cultivation of the labor vote — and New York is a great union city; to the cultivation of the "foreign" vote (i.e., the "New Immigration" and the Northern Negroes) — and New York is a great "foreign" city; to the cultivation of the relief vote — and New York came in for a great share of Federal relief.

If LaGuardia's plans and policies for greater New York were to be continued, he could not afford to ignore the changing basis of American politics, which was outmoding the old-fashioned organization of Republicans and Democrats.

From his own point of view in particular, he could not afford to ignore the existence of the labor vote, the Jewish vote (the largest and most influential bloc of New York citizens) or the relief vote.

The second half of his Administration, therefore, was to see an increase in LaGuardia's gestures and utterances, in response to this situation. It was to see LaGuardia make common cause with the Western Progressives, to endorse Roosevelt as the nominee of the American Labor Party, to make campaign speeches for Roosevelt and to vote for him in the mighty November, 1936, barbecue of Republican hopes. It was to see LaGuardia make common cause with organized labor, to the extent of endorsing the "closed shop" principle for New York. It was to see him provoke an international incident by his insulting references to Germany, references which endeared him to the New York Jewish community and disturbed the rest of the country. It was to see the deliberate cultivation by LaGuardia of a national reputation — in addition to his city record — with a view to keeping that "rendezvous with destiny" which he had long foreseen as the reorganization of the political parties and the creation of a dominant progressivism which would control and direct our national life, along the lines of Abraham Lincoln, the elder LaFollette and George W. Norris.

IV

What had happened in New York cannot be understood unless it is realized — as the Republicans refused to realize — that the period 1934-37 was a period of tremendous political change, not only in America but throughout the world. These years witnessed the statistical and manipulative recovery of American business and agriculture and the loyal action of the Supreme Court in invalidating any reforms which threatened to carry recovery into a real reconstruction of American Big

Business. They witnessed a steady increase in the cost of living, they witnessed tremendous labor movements — the wave of strikes in 1934 directed by the Federation of Labor, the wave of strikes in 1937 directed by John L. Lewis's Committee for Industrial Organization. These years witnessed the rise and assassination of Huey Long and a growing restiveness among the tenants, croppers and farm workers of the South and the Pacific Coast. They witnessed the effort at Republican recapture of the Federal Government through the candidacy of Governor Landon of Kansas, the pathological Republican worship of the judiciary, Republican cultivation of Southern sectionalism and Republican promotion of rivalries between skilled and semi-skilled labor. They witnessed the enactment of social security legislation and labor reforms. They witnessed the temporary satisfaction of the Corn Belt and a panicky demand by organized public opinion that the nation abandon all further remedial legislation.

All of these forces reacted on New York City. But New York is more than an American metropolis: it is a world-city. New York's financial, commercial and shipping interests link the city with the world at large — particularly with Europe. New York's large foreign-born population insures that her citizens shall take a passionate interest in European affairs. These were the years when Hitler crushed Democracy in Germany, began the systematic persecution of the Jews, and launched Germany on a crusade against political Marxism. These were the years when Italian Fascism, under Mussolini, completed the conquest of Abyssinia, in the face of the British Empire, the League of Nations and American public opinion. These were the years when Mussolini and Hitler combined to back the Fascist revolt of General Franco against the reformist policies of the Spanish Republic. These were the years when the Vatican, after attempting to meet economic discontent with the liberal Encyclicals of Pope Pius XI, reverted

to the old Pius IX policy of supporting vested interests and combating political and social change. These were the years when the death of George V, the abdication of Edward VIII and his marriage as the Duke of Windsor to an American divorcée shook the moral prestige of British Royalty and weakened England at the hour of peril. These were the years when Stalin, faced with difficulties and miscalculations in his managed economy, launched a purge of the Trotskyites, executed some of the leaders of the Red Army, and seriously demoralized Soviet officialdom.

All of these events had a vigorous echo in New York, where the sentimental liberals and "parlor-Bolsheviks" of 1919 had been supplanted by a conscious literary Marxism which made the epithets of "Fascist" and "Communist" partisan currency in local and national politics. All in all, New York public opinion could be described as a witches' brew of dogmatic doctrines, racial and national hatreds, social and economic hunger, steeped in bitterness and prejudice without parallel save in the period of the World War.

Out of this mess, there were only three solid elements on which a reform Mayor could build his political support: the relief clients, the labor unions, and the anti-Fascist and for the most part Jewish group in control of so much of business, banking and organized public opinion.

With regard to the organization of the relief vote, there were — and are — two schools of thought. One was the Tammany method: no vote, no relief. This found favor with important groups of national and State relief administrators and, though discouraged by the Washington authorities, was freely practiced in order to line up the recipients of relief for New Deal candidates. It had the merit of being in line with political tradition and certainly produced results in the 1936 national election.

The other theory — that which LaGuardia seemed to

adopt — was that a good job of administering relief, preventing starvation and human misery, enriching and enlarging the lives and opportunities of the underprivileged is enough in itself. If the job is well done, practical gratitude at the polls will be inevitable and automatic. Sound and humane government pays political dividends without requiring anyone to sell his vote for a grocery-slip or to be herded to the polls by a W.P.A. foreman. This theory involves a trust in the people, a faith in democracy which is rather unsatisfactory to those machine-politicians who want to know how every vote is going to be cast in advance of the election. It is the wiser and, in the long run, the safer policy for a Progressive politician to follow.

LaGuardia's grip on the relief vote may be measured by the fact that on July 1, 1937, the summer preceding the election, his relief taxes were raising \$66,000,000 a year for home relief, in addition to four times as much money made available for work projects by the Federal authorities. This meant that the mayor was spending more on elementary relief than Tammany had ever spent on its well-advertised "charity". It meant that the needy were being taken care of all year round, instead of just tided through the winter by a bucket or so of coal, a basket of groceries and a pair of shoes. In practical figures it meant that there were over 300,000 "cases" and persons on relief, who owed their support to the combined operation of the New Deal at the City Hall and the New Deal at Washington at an annual expense of about \$300,000,000. The bread-and-butter vote in New York, as in other large cities, has always been heavy and by any calculation, the relief rolls of New York City represented at least 600,000 out of New York City's two million votes. While some of these had been short-circuited to Democratic bosses outside of Manhattan Island, enough remained to give LaGuardia a good running start in any city election.

The labor vote required active cultivation. There were 700,000 dues-paying union labor members in New York City alone. American labor, as a whole, is not class-conscious and, outside of certain towns and industries, has never developed much solidarity. At the same time, American labor is as keenly aware of its own interest as any manufacturer, landlord or shop-keeper. The battle between Lewis and Green for control of semi-skilled industrial labor complicated the picture without altering it, but had the unfortunate effect of encouraging business men to try to play one off against the other and to raise the cry of "Communism!" against the very simple, practical and profit-motivated demands of the industrial unions which represented the Lewis wing of the movement.

This was a situation which demanded constant attention from LaGuardia, as from any politician who must deal with labor problems. By the fall of 1934, the first great wave of A.F. of L. strikes was a failure. In automobiles, in steel, in textiles, Green had tried to unionize by virtue of "bloody Clause 7-A" of the National Industrial Recovery Act, which guaranteed collective bargaining. He had been beaten. It was at this time that LaGuardia decided to state his position on Labor problems. He travelled to Chicago and delivered a Labor Day address at the Chicago Exposition, which was not only an expression of his Progressive philosophy but a first move toward the political organization of labor against the "gentlemen in well-warmed clubs" whom Roosevelt later denounced at Warm Springs.

"The depression was brought about through no fault of labor," said the Mayor, "but because those responsible for the control of finance and industry of the country refused to heed the warnings of labor.

"If as much time, effort and money as have been spent in the last twenty years by great industrial organizations in fight-

ing for the open shop and in keeping down wages had been expended in a spirit of cooperation to bring about a better understanding between capital and labor, to prevent the constant increase in unemployment caused by technological displacement and thereby maintain a stable purchasing power, the country would not find itself in its present predicament."

He continued, with an eye on the rapidly moulting Blue Eagle: "It will take more than a slogan to pull the country out of the crisis. It will take more than synthetic capitalism to bring us to the end of our troubles. The American people have stiff necks from looking around the corner, waiting for the return of prosperity. The hungry children of the unemployed cannot be fed with epigrams. We must get right down to fundamentals. The American standard of living cannot and must not be sacrificed. Industry and business can be restored and the American standard of living maintained, but we will have to settle down to the fact that the high profits derived in the old days cannot be obtained or expected today. This simply means that there will be a more equitable division of profits.

"American industry has learned that without the purchasing power of the workers it cannot sell its goods, and without selling its goods there cannot be profits. The country is losing patience with the legalistic technician who provides many varieties of constitutional objections to every remedy proposed, considered or even tried. He is a fit companion for his brother, the old-time economist who repeats with parrot-like precision and irritation that there is only one law of the universe, that of 'supply and demand'.

"Old supply and demand may have been all right in its day — supply and demand where the supply was entirely created by hand and primitive machines; where there was no speculative credit upsetting the balance; no possibility of monopolies controlling and cornering supplies; and where

demand really represented human requirements and production balanced that demand. . . . Today there is no limit to production. There is a limit, however, placed on demand. Demand today does not represent human requirements, but only ability to buy. That is a very different thing.

"It may be necessary to make drastic changes," LaGuardia announced. "A shorter working day and working week. We must come out of this with a new economy. This new economy can be entirely consistent with the American philosophy of government. Our new economy not only can but literally must go far toward translating into a reality that equality and happiness that we have been striving for since the foundation of the Republic. I, too, admire the 'rugged individual', but no 'rugged individual' can survive in the midst of collective starvation.

"Perhaps it is not pleasant to be regimented. But so far as labor is concerned, regimentation is no new idea. It took place a generation ago, when hired labor received a factory number and gave up his name. Regimentation is a natural development of the present industrial system. It has existed for a long time. If the working people are to be regimented, I would much rather see them regimented in honest labor, paying a decent living wage, than regimented on the relief rolls, on the breadlines and at the doors of frigid charity. Regimentation of business is no new idea either. It started in 1890 and we call it monopoly. If regimentation there must be, let it be in the public interest."

The speech might have been suggested by Professor Tugwell, but there is no doubt that LaGuardia spoke his own convictions when he declared that "American labor has its responsibility. It must use its head.

"American labor always has problems which must be solved with American employers and American capital. It is fair to speak frankly on that point too. A strike is the last

means of solution, and not the first; it is justified only after every resource of discussion and negotiation has been tried and failed. During strikes it must always be remembered that the public interest is paramount. The safety of great masses of people not parties to the discussion, and the functioning of government, can never be a stake in any bargaining process. Starvation is not a legitimate weapon for capital to use against labor. It is no more legitimate for labor to use it against the public.

"Political parties, as such, are on the wane. Perhaps in 1936 we shall see the last contest between the two great existing political parties, and in that campaign I venture to predict there will be the greatest political chassé ever seen in the history of American politics.

"The responsibility of the American Federation of Labor also requires that it put its own house in order. A greater control on the part of the national officers is essential to prevent local abuses and exploitation. Machinery for the speedy settling of intra-trade disputes and so-called jurisdictional matters should be provided. Nothing has created more misunderstanding. Where the employer is not at fault, work should never cease by reason of an inter-trade dispute which doesn't concern him. It should never permit itself to be criticized for breaking the terms of a contract. Labor should invite, and not discourage, the bringing into its ranks of the professions directly connected with labor.

"Labor," he concluded, "as a major part of industrial civilization, must share in remaking our Constitution and our institutions to bring about economic security that alone gives a real meaning to individual liberty, to marshall our tremendous resources for the benefit of all the people, and must dedicate its head and its heart to the greatest task American statesmanship has yet faced."

The *New York Times*, like Queen Victoria, was "not

amused" by his irreverent references to the law of supply and demand and to the revision of the Constitution, but two years later paid tribute to the effectiveness of his work as an industrial conciliator. It is, indeed, worthy of note that this "radical" has done more to save his city from the violence and dislocation of great strikes than the practical politicians and law-and-order authorities in many other communities. When the American Labor Party was organized in 1936, as an adjunct of the New Deal campaign, LaGuardia hastened to support it, and worked, spoke and voted for Roosevelt under its auspices.

Early in 1937, he appointed an impartial City Industrial Relations Board of three members — Professor Llewellyn of Columbia Law School, A. S. Meyer of the Schulte Real Estate Co., and Mrs. Anna M. Rosenberg, regional director of the Social Security Board — to aid in settling disputes. The Board served, with great success, until its functions were taken over by the New York State Board of Mediation. In three months the LaGuardia Board settled 187 disputes, without ballyhoo or later hard feelings. In the final set-up, the LaGuardia scheme featured a panel of 150 voluntary arbitrators — fifty each to represent labor, industry and the public — a system which attracted public-spirited and prominent men and might well serve as a model for a similar Federal plan.

His reward for saving the City what Chicago, Youngstown and Johnstown had suffered came when Bronson Trevor, a member of a socially prominent family and a cousin of the late Senator Cutting, circularized 16,000 Republicans in the silk-stockings Fifteenth District, urging them not to renominate LaGuardia because "his administration is one of the most extravagant the city has ever had (!). He has done nothing to stop the spread of communism in relief agencies and schools. He has given insufficient police protection during riots and strikes. This is a matter of court record. Recently an

insurance company secured a judgment against the city on these grounds. His policies and appointments have favored the growth of the American Labor Party at the expense of the Republican Party."

The Mayor's answer was to pledge that he would do everything in his power to make New York "a 100% union city". He broadcast a reply to those who were making loose threats against "Communists": "I now state that economic issues cannot be settled with the policeman's nightstick. Any philosophy of government under our Constitution can be decided only through the mediums and channels provided in the Constitution, and cannot be suppressed by the use of force. The force of the State cannot be improperly used to suppress freedom of speech, or of expression, or of action if within the law.

"We are a government of free men and women and it is our duty to protect these rights. So long as I am Mayor of New York, I shall protect the constitutional rights of every citizen whether I agree with him or not, and whether I like him or not. I will not use the Police Department to beat and abuse people who are acting within their rights and remaining within the limits of the law."

This was a knock-out, against the back-drop of the ghastly Memorial Day massacre of strike-pickets by the Chicago Police, and caused the inevitable local industrialist to ask the Mayor to refrain from "employer-baiting". But the Little Flower stuck to his guns and told the manufacturers of building material: "Some of you gentlemen whom I see here have criticized those of us who have been trying to build up purchasing power. The American laborer and farmer must have that purchasing power, and until he gets it all the showrooms you construct and all the catalogues you can publish will not help much to create new markets for your products."

This forthright labor policy paid LaGuardia political divi-

dends. Early in August, 1937, when certain New York Republicans were preparing to pluck the Little Flower from the G.O.P. greenhouse, by the same trick the Republicans had played on John Purroy Mitchel in 1917, when they lured the reformer into their primaries and let him be beaten by a Party hack named Bennett, the American Labor Party gave the Mayor its nomination and a place on the ballot in the coming city elections. The Party's Manifesto described LaGuardia as "the greatest Mayor the City of New York has ever had" and praised the "unsurpassed integrity and achievement" of his administration. While wealthy Republicans called him a "Communist", the Labor Party praised him for his success in mediating labor disputes and added: "One cannot help contrasting this record . . . both in times of strikes and during critical periods when strikes threatened, with the record of administrations in other big American cities, where as a result of callous indifference or open hostility of city officials, riots, bloodshed and untold industrial wastage have been permitted to take place and the elementary rights of workers have been trampled underfoot."

It was an accolade amply deserved and one which does honor to any man who earns it. In this case, it carried the promise of 600,000 votes in the coming election.

Far less fortunate was his handling of foreign Fascism. Here he was in a difficult position. The advent of Mussolini had done much to increase racial self-respect and dignity among even those Italians who passionately hated the principles and practices of the *Fascisti*. Italy was again a great power, for the first time since the fall of Rome, and the 1,300,000 members of the Italian community in New York had emerged from the Prohibition era with greater wealth and stability than before. LaGuardia had fought Fascist intrigues among the Sons of Italy, and as a Protestant and a Mason, he was unsympathetic to the spiritual and material regi-

mentation involved in Mussolini's Third Rome. But he was careful not to touch the self-esteem of the Italian voters, aided the Italian Red Cross during the Ethiopian campaign, and ventured no public criticism of Mussolini and Fascism in Italy.

Hitler was different. Hitler was persecuting the Jews and some busybody had dug up and made political capital of the fact that the Mayor's mother was Jewish. Moreover, Naziism represented all that he had detested as a youngster in Austro-Hungarian repression and privilege. New York City contained over 1,765,000 members of the Jewish race and the 600,000 New York Germans themselves were not especially responsive to Nazi propaganda. The vast majority were completely assimilated Americans and many of them were politically hostile to the ideas of Hitler. It was a set-up for Nazi-baiting, which would mark the Mayor as an anti-Fascist and also win strong practical political support.

LaGuardia had already been instrumental in swinging the Mayors' Conference — a rough parallel to the Governors' Conference which Roosevelt had found so useful — against an official visit to Berlin. Early in March, 1937, he saw his opportunity. He referred to Hitler as "the brown-shirted fanatic who is now menacing the peace of the world" and nominated the German Reichsfuehrer for a "chamber of horrors" in a building dedicated to religious freedom at the New York World's Fair. This proposal was made in a speech at a \$20-a-plate lunch of the women's division of the American Jewish Congress, to raise funds to combat Naziism in the United States.

The German press raved and called LaGuardia a "*Lumpen*." LaGuardia retaliated with an untranslatable Teutonic insult against Hitler. Secretary of State Cordell Hull apologized to the indignant German Ambassador and for the first time since the World War, Americans in Germany were treated with

public contempt and hatred. The incident raged for a fortnight and then was dropped by mutual consent in both countries. LaGuardia had scored an important political effect, but at serious cost in civic dignity and public responsibility. It is perhaps the most dubious episode in his political career, not because of the sentiments he expressed — which were those of great numbers of American liberals — but because, under the American system of Government, he could not be called to account by Washington and yet had taken advantage of his immunity to complicate our difficult and delicate relations with the Third Reich. Moreover, it tended still further to involve American opinion in the vicissitudes of European politics at a time when the course of affairs at home required ceaseless vigilance if the Progressive cause was to be saved from sabotage.

For President Roosevelt had precipitated the long-deferred realignment of political parties, by a proposal to enlarge and liberalize the Supreme Court and to control the lower Federal Courts. In the political confusion which followed, many of the objects of Progressive legislation were being hacked to pieces by their political enemies and there was danger that the whole great mandate of the 1936 election would be lost. In snapping at the bone of European Fascism there was danger lest LaGuardia would help American Progressives to lose everything for which they had been fighting for more than twenty weary years.

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In fact, by the late summer of 1937, it seemed probable that the realignment of political parties, which the Progressives had long prophesied, might prove to be Mayor LaGuardia's greatest single obstacle to reelection.

LaGuardia's earlier and somewhat sanctimonious attitude on partisanship and patronage thus became a great deal clearer. What use to build up a Fusion political machine, when

all existing political machines — Republican, Democratic and Socialist — were headed for the junk-pile? Under these circumstances it had been easy to pledge himself to non-partisanship in 1933, as partisanship was then understood. Two weeks before his election he had told a meeting of organization Republicans: "I was selected as the candidate for mayor not because of my political virtues, but because of my political vices. I pledge a non-political administration to the city, and I have only one purpose: to rehabilitate, reorganize and preserve the city.

"One other thing I want to say, and this is the proper place to say it. On January 1, when I take office, I go out of politics for four years. One can't be a good fellow and be a good mayor. One can't be a good mayor and be a politician. My responsibility is to the City of New York, and not to the rehabilitation of any political party."

This was fair warning that he proposed to give the city a "good government" administration and not to play "politics" as it was then understood. The Republicans understood it to mean that he would not take an active part in national affairs, outside of his office. It is doubtful that LaGuardia ever had such an intention. He is not the stuff of which political eunuchs are made, and even if he abstained from partisanship, he could not abdicate his own progressive principles.

The simple Western test of practicality had convinced him long ago that the nation was heading toward a fundamental reorganization of its political life and institutions. All signs pointed to the period between 1936 and 1940 as the time when the real change would take place, and events served to confirm that view. As early as 1932, a group of young men and women — of whom the author was one — tried to establish what they called The New National Party: an exploratory movement which based its operations on the assumption that 1940 was the year when the new political alignment would be-

come effective. So far as the movement was known at all, it was misunderstood as an attempt to establish, rather than to discover, the Party of the future. Roosevelt and LaGuardia between them, were to help supply the answer.

It is important, therefore, to note that during the period of 1933-37, Fiorello LaGuardia continued to act as John the Baptist for Franklin Roosevelt's "New Game". This game implied the reorganization of the Federal Courts — a measure which struck at the roots of Republican power — and used the emotions thus aroused to bring about the new political groupings necessary to effect that and similar broad social policies.

As early as May, 1934, LaGuardia told the students of New York University that Roosevelt would take the leadership of the progressive elements in the country and that he would be deserted by the conservatives in his own party. "There will be a great shuffling about. A Republican of the Northeast can't have the same kind of Republicanism as a member of the party from the Southwest. The same is true of the Democrats, in juxtaposition." This was innocent enough. Less pleasing to the Republicans was his action a year later in broadcasting a message to accompany a speech by Governor Philip F. LaFollette to ten thousand Wisconsin Progressives celebrating the first anniversary of their Party at Fond du Lac. On this occasion the Mayor announced: "Both parties are burdened with standpatters who have not had an original idea in the last half century. They talk with a parrot-like monotony of constitutional rights, of rugged individualism, of government interference with business and seem to accept and consider themselves the anointed and chosen individuals to exploit the land, and seem to believe that the Constitution was written for no other purpose than to guarantee continued exploitation of the many by the chosen few. There is no such language in the Constitution, nor was there ever such intent when it was drafted and ratified by the States."

Early Republican grumblings were met by that unanswerable argument, a "balanced budget" for the city, balanced by economies and good administration — with the unavowed help of Federal largess. The Mayor was going to give the G.O.P. "good government", even if it meant calling all bluffs. By 1936, it began to be apparent that the larger political issues could not be ignored. The "great shuffling about" had begun. Al Smith, Jim Reed, Bainbridge Colby, John W. Davis, and other Northern Democrats ostentatiously deserted the Democratic Party in the national campaign and were received with whoops of joy and paeans of praise from the Wall Street Republicans who hoped to crack away the Conservative Democratic support on which Roosevelt had come to power. With this sort of thing going on, LaGuardia could not remain silent. In a speech before the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, he had challenged either of the political parties to bring the Constitutional issue before the people, saying that he did not believe that the people would be in favor of reducing the power of the Supreme Court but of giving power to Congress to regulate commerce, labor and agriculture, by Constitutional amendment. A few days later, he said, "I predict, just as sure as you are sitting here, that political machines in this country are going out of existence in the next ten years."

The campaign wore on. Landon was burning up the headlines and Roosevelt was counting on reelection by a sharply reduced margin, as the Courts tied up his program and as billions of organized wealth moved to sway the public mind against him. The Progressive cause looked pretty shaky. Early in September, therefore, Fiorello committed himself to the Roosevelt cause. Together with Senator Norris, Bob LaFollette, Senator Bone, Governor Benson and other Progressives he signed a call for a Conference of Progressives at Chicago and endorsed the candidacy of President Roosevelt. At the time, LaGuardia said he considered it his decisive step in

thrusting aside his past association with the National Republican Party and allying himself with the New Deal fortunes. It was added that his association with the Committee would give him a chance to give active support to the President without allying himself with the official Democratic campaign machine. He also was quoted again as feeling that major political realignments were due in the nation and as wishing to associate himself with progressive and labor groups in the belief that such a coalition might become the dominant force by 1940.

Under the Chairmanship of Bob LaFollette, a committee of more than a hundred, including two Governors, four Senators, twelve Representatives and twenty-seven labor leaders (John L. Lewis and Sydney Hillman among them), a permanent organization was formed. LaGuardia served as chairman of the sub-committee that drew up the resolution of support for Roosevelt. This resolution made an indictment of the existing economic chaos and social insecurity, it listed six main principles of Progressive support, it warned of reactionary efforts to regain control of the national government, and it applauded Roosevelt's efforts to establish popular government.

From this point on, LaGuardia was gambling on the future. He kept hammering about the Constitution, saying that the country had grown into an economic unit and that the Constitution should be changed to meet the interdependence of the States. The *New York Herald-Tribune*, quoted him as remarking: "What a paradox, in a country that will cheer and build monuments, and properly so, to inventors and scientists and discoverers of new machines, but will seek to ostracize and brand another a radical who seeks to create the laws and establish the economies to make these things possible for all the people." That autumn, the Mayor campaigned for Roosevelt and spoke for him at Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Rochester, Gary, Omaha and New York City. When Governor Petersen

of Minnesota was advocating a new third party, he included LaGuardia as a matter of course, along with the LaFollettes, Senator Norris and Senator Wheeler as representing "the same political ideals". At Omaha, Nebraska, LaGuardia said, "New York is asking Nebraska to give us George W. Norris in the United States Senate." He called Norris "the all-American Senator from Nebraska" and said, "I sat at his feet fourteen years ago when I was a member of that small group in the House often called insurgents, radicals and worse names. He is one of three men who have given me the most inspiration and encouragement." The others the Mayor listed were Abraham Lincoln and the elder Robert LaFollette. LaGuardia was returning to the West, to the frontier, for his political inspiration, to the American dream of pioneer equality and economic stability. And he announced his intention to vote for Roosevelt on the American Labor Party ticket.

The G.O.P. could scarcely be expected to overlook such heresies. At first, the shock of the anti-Landon landslide benumbed the Republican organization. Then, in the dubious guise of a political godsend, came Roosevelt's plan to reform the Supreme Court. The "shuffling about" continued, as more and more elderly or conservative Democrats deserted the New Deal Party's leader and defied the election returns on the Constitutional issue. All but a handful of the Southern Senators, and men like Copeland of New York, Walsh of Massachusetts, Burke of Nebraska and Wheeler of Montana, produced the highest motives, raised racial and religious issues against this change, and joined the Republicans. The New Deal program was paralyzed and the New Deal Party split into two hostile wings over which the Republican remnant held the balance of power. After the terrible defeat of the Republican Party at the polls, it suddenly seemed possible to rebuild a conservative party out of the remaining Republicans and the seceding Democrats. Mark Sullivan, who voiced the

wishes of the Republican high command, had been advocating such a procedure for months and ex-President Hoover was later to issue a statement urging Republicans to vote for all anti-reform Democratic Senators.

The Republicans in New York likewise sensed the opportunity. By the end of January, 1937, the Queens Chairman of the Fusion Party had resigned criticizing LaGuardia for using the movement for "his own selfish purposes" and in particular for ruling that public officials must not participate in party affairs. By May, there was open agitation against LaGuardia in Republican Party circles and finally, in an extraordinary letter to the Members of the Fifteenth District Republic Club (who had just howled down an appeal to go on record as favoring LaGuardia's renomination in the interest of "good government") Kenneth F. Simpson, the Republican County Chairman who had ousted Chase Mellen from control, dropped the pretense that the Republicans really wanted good government in New York. What they wanted was first Republican government and then to subordinate the city's affairs to the national political considerations. The letter also showed that the Republicans regarded themselves as a pressure-group rather than a party, so far as city politics was concerned, thus matching their actual position in national politics. It was a frank, realistic statement of the sort that only an amateur would put in quotable written form before a large gathering:

"The balance of power in the 1937 New York City election," wrote Simpson, a Yale graduate, a "Skull-and-Bones" man and a corporation lawyer, "will be in the hands of the Republican voters of the city. Measured by their strength at the last general election they will cast between one-fourth and one-third of the total vote. This is probably not enough votes to elect a straight Republican ticket. It is, however, more than enough votes to elect or defeat any candidate for any office on

any other ticket. In so far as I have any influence in the matter, I intend to urge that these votes be cast to insure the progress of good government in New York.

"Much pressure is being brought to secure the Republican nomination for Mr. LaGuardia. He was elected by Republican votes four years ago, as he himself generously admits. He has been called a demagogue, which, also, he would probably be the first to admit. He has, in any event, adopted a political technique patterned somewhat after Washington, and consisting of the conscious creation of racial and class support and the conscious cultivation of certain labor and other pressure groups, which is distasteful to many citizens.

"But in the execution of the activities of his office he has made a good Mayor. He has thrown out the grafters and the chisellers and the crooks, and has tried earnestly to see that the city got full value for its money. He has been consciously concerned with improving the conditions of the great masses of the unemployed and underprivileged in our city. Some of the municipal departments in his administration, notably the Park Department and the Law Department (run by Republicans!) have been magnificently managed.

"In the handling of relief, however, the costs continue to mount, in spite of the business recovery, and he has poured hundreds of millions of dollars of obligations on the taxpayers in the way of loans from Washington. Some day the people of New York will wake up to the meaning of this burden, and it will be a sad awakening.

"Taking the picture as a whole, however, there is far more in Mayor LaGuardia's record to praise than to condemn. Many good citizens believe that he is entitled to the Republican nomination on his record. Perhaps he is.

"But the problem is not a simple one. Mayor LaGuardia received the Republican nomination after giving the most solemn promise that he would conduct an absolutely non-

partisan and non-political administration and keep himself and the great power of his office entirely aloof from partisan politics. Responsible Republican leaders said to him before he was nominated: 'We shall not ask you to appoint Republicans. We shall not ask you to support the Republican candidate for President in 1936. But we do ask you not to give aid and comfort to our political enemies. We ask your solemn promise not to support the Democratic nominees for President and Governor in 1936.' This promise Mayor LaGuardia made. This promise, in 1936, he violated. He took part in the formation of the American Labor Party, and used the power of his high position, given him by Republican voters, to defeat the Republican candidates for Governor, for the Assembly, for Congress, and for the Presidency, and to campaign actively against the principles and the candidates of the Republican party.

“Mayor LaGuardia, both in public utterance and in private conversations, has made it clear that he is an avowed radical. He has let it be known that in his opinion the national election in 1940 will witness a new political alignment. On one hand, in his opinion, there will be a constitutional party, representing a merger of Republicans and Democrats; on the other side will be a party dedicated to the ideal of a collectivist State, a party of Lewis, Dubinsky, the New Deal wing of the Democratic Party, LaFollette and himself. He has made it clear that his allegiance will be to this group and its collectivist purposes.

“If and when that alignment takes place there will be no question that the Republican voters of the country will be on the side of the Constitution and against collectivism. They will have to be against Mayor LaGuardia. It is a serious question whether the Republican voters of New York City have a right, by reelecting him to the Mayoralty, to put him in a position of power from which he can more efficiently work in 1940

for the defeat of the principles which they hold to be fundamental.

"I do not intend to be hurried into a decision. The primaries will be held in September. To the Democratic leaders of this city I serve this warning: If you are to get any Republican support in the Fall elections, discard any idea that you can present to the voters a second rate machine politician. Find a George B. McClellan, a William J. Gaynor, a J. P. Mitchel; find a District Attorney like William T. Jerome — men you cannot control and whom the voters know you cannot control.

"To the so-called Fusion party and the American Labor Party I say: If we are going to have a non-partisan government in the City of New York, it has got to be a whole-heartedly non-partisan government, not a half-hearted non-partisan government, nor may it be, as was recently urged publicly by one of the responsible leaders of the American Labor Party, a frankly radical and 'local New Deal' government.

"The balance of power is in the hands of the six to eight hundred thousand Republican voters. I purpose to see that that power is used for the purpose of good government in New York City and is not frittered away."

Simpson had told the whole story, as it appeared to the "good government" group of professional men in New York City. He over-estimated Republican strength, however, as the registration figures showed that the Democrats had a 5-to-1 majority in the City. And he had not told the real story of what was happening. A general wave of political reaction seemed to be gathering. In Spain, the Spanish Loyalists were slowly being ground down by the Fascist armies of General Franco. The Vatican had taken a more conservative stand than at any time since the World Depression began and in the United States the Catholic hierarchy had helped the big bankers and industrialists to defeat the Child Labor Amendment

and to prevent a vote on Roosevelt's Judiciary Reform Bill. In New York City, Roosevelt's old and embittered enemy, former Governor Alfred E. Smith, had persuaded Tammany Hall that the time had come for an open battle against the New Deal. Two Tammany bosses in succession — Jimmy Dooling and, after Dooling's death, Chris Sullivan — had subscribed to Smith's plot to run United States Senator Dr. Royal S. Copeland, formerly Health Commissioner under Mayor Hylan, for the Democratic nomination. The Democratic leaders in the other four boroughs, who played the New Deal game and had been rewarded with New Deal patronage, proposed to run Grover Whalen and, later, when Whalen withdrew, Judge Jeremiah T. Mahoney, a rebellious Tammany District leader.

On the face of the relative machine-voting strength of the two Democratic candidates, Mahoney seemed likely to win. But the Tammany-Smith scheme included the Liberty League-Mark Sullivan idea of entering Copeland in the Republican primaries as well, with the active connivance of Ogden Mills and Charles D. Hilles, the State Republican boss. This offered the picture of the New York Republican organization nominating a Tammany Democrat (or of Tammany joining the Republican Party) in order to defeat a "local New Deal" semi-Republican city administration, while the regular Democratic candidate might split the normal Democratic vote, as McKee had done in 1933, thus permitting the reelection of a Labor Party Progressive.

The actual result of the primary elections on September 16 only deepened the political confusion. Copeland was defeated on both the Republican and Democratic tickets by majorities of 2-to-1 in favor of LaGuardia and Mahoney, but he amassed a total of 280,000 anti-New Deal votes in the process. In addition, nearly 55,000 registered Democrats wrote in LaGuardia's name, although he was not entered in their primary. Despite

Senator Copeland's effort to revive the Ku Klux Klan as an issue and to drag the Constitution into his campaign, New York City's organized voters — normally one-third of the total turnout on election day — had turned in a crushing New Deal majority, leaving the backers of the Tammany-G.O.P. candidate the choice between surrender and an independent candidacy.

These developments suggested how far the "great shuffling around" had proceeded. The "good government" gag was almost exhausted by now. Both groups were watching national affairs and making their calculations on the new basis created by the New Deal. It is true that Mr. Adolph A. Berle, Jr., the ex-Brain Truster who had given needed gray matter to the municipal reforms instituted by LaGuardia, including Proportional Representation under the new City Charter, was talking reassuringly in the old terms. He told the Progressive City Committee: "I know that all of you here are interested in the continuation of able, non-partisan, non-political city government. The campaign for that is now being shaped up, and to my mind, very satisfactorily. Gradually there are being segregated the great groups of independent Democrats and independent young Republicans who believe in honest non-political government, on the one side, and on the other we have the groups which are prepared to swallow graft and rotten politics, and the reactionaries, opposed to free speech, freedom of the press and other liberties in the interests of preserving the profit motive. This makes a clean-cut campaign on issues to which we can all subscribe."

The practical question was not mentioned: Whether Mayor LaGuardia could get enough support from the independent good government group, from the 1,765,000 Jews, the 1,300,000 Italians, the 327,000 Negroes, the labor vote and the relief vote, to win a three-cornered fight against an anti-Roosevelt Tammany Democrat on the Republican ticket and against a Tammany Democrat on a New Deal ticket.

On the answer to this question depended far more than the future of honest administration in New York's City Hall, far more than the political future of Fiorello H. LaGuardia. What happened in New York's city elections in 1937 was bound to affect the whole trend of Progressive politics in the United States and the fortunes of the New Deal itself in national affairs. LaGuardia had always been a dangerous man to beat. He had always come back at the victors by raising the ante, until he had made himself a national figure: "America's No. 1 Mayor." If he were beaten now, his defeat could not fail to influence that "rendezvous with destiny" which the American people are reluctantly facing in 1938 and 1940.

5. RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY

I

LAGUARDIA had always been a dangerous man to beat. He was now a dangerous man for liberals to allow to be beaten. He had so definitely identified himself with the progressive cause in national affairs that by 1937 he rated as one of the three major political personalities in the United States — the other two being Franklin D. Roosevelt and Robert M. LaFollette. The gap between Hyde Park and Varick Street had been narrowed in the course of fifty-five years until the New Deal President and the New Deal Mayor stood shoulder to shoulder, and the Wisconsin Progressive Senator stood beside them as leaders of the great reform movement. The log cabin in which the elder LaFollette had been born, the East Side tenement where Irene LaGuardia had brought forth her first child, and the Hudson Valley mansion in which Roosevelt had been the only son — all had come together at last and symbolized a fundamental change in American affairs. For — and this is the point — the time had passed when it was a political handicap to be well-born, a political asset to be born on the frontier or within smelling distance of the city streets. One man had, at last, become as good as another — if he were worth anything in himself. This was a revolution.

The “rendez-vous with destiny” which Roosevelt foresaw was the result of this revolution, and LaGuardia’s contribution to that destiny not only complemented the work of Roosevelt, LaFollette and the Western Progressives but contained elements without which Western Progressivism would have turned

as sour as Senator Borah or as stale as organized charity.

LaGuardia had come to represent the most vital part of the New Deal. He represented the reality, instead of the fiction, of "the more abundant life" which Roosevelt preached but was unable to put into practice. He represented scientific, non-partisan administration of a kind quite new in American city government. He represented the rise to political power of the "new immigration" and the leavening of Anglo-Saxon bucolic hypocrisy by the strong, healthy skepticism of races which had faced bitter reality for centuries. He represented the cause of American labor and the national rebellion against government in the interest of the few and favored. He represented a possible future.

LaGuardia had not achieved this without conscious effort. Between him and Roosevelt, as between him and the Western Progressives, there had long been a warm personal sympathy and a loose working understanding. It would not be too much to say that the man who best knew what was in Roosevelt's mind was Fiorello LaGuardia, and the other way around. LaGuardia knew because it was in his mind, too, and because he had studied Roosevelt's methods as a first violinist in the Philharmonic studies the methods of Arturo Toscanini.

A great deal of LaGuardia's reputation for incessant work was protective coloration for the fact that he was out of the City Hall almost as much as Jimmy Walker himself had been. To keep abreast of his duties, the Little Flower had to work hard whenever he found himself in his office. For just as Roosevelt had advanced his national reputation, while Governor at Albany, by attending Governors' Conferences and making trips to various parts of the country, so did LaGuardia use the newly invented Conference of Mayors to serve as a political sounding-board and so did LaGuardia travel through the United States. Some of this may have been designed to help him live down the picture of "the Little Wop" which had been freely circu-

lated among the white-collar Anglo-Saxons. More of it was designed to put the Mayor's ideas in national circulation.

In 1934, for example, he made the Labor Day address at the Chicago Exposition — as previously noted — and then went on for a week's campaigning in Wisconsin for Bob La-Follette. In the following April, he returned to Prescott, Arizona, for his first visit in thirty-seven years to the little Army Post where he had spent his childhood. The entire town turned out to greet him. It was an affair made to order for national publicity. He wore a cowboy hat and recalled how his father had taken him to the Jerome mining camp during a rally in the McKinley-Bryan campaign. "It was here," he said, "I saw my first electric light and here the first woman I ever saw smoking a cigarette." There were pleasant recollections of the little two-story red brick school house from which he graduated in 1898 and he told how he used to write a column of the doings at old Fort Whipple for the *Prescott Morning Courier*. "It wasn't very original, I realize now," he said, "but I wrote under the name of 'Arizona Pete'. Then, later, the name of 'Alkali Ike' struck me as being better, so I changed it to that. The editor, he wasn't much of a go-getter — well, anyway, once every month or two he'd hand me a buck." It was shrewd publicity, as he greeted Joe "Goo Goo" Bauer and other boyhood school mates who remembered him in the old days, tried vainly to find old Goldwater's general store, and ate in the same little Chinese restaurant that had been the smart place in Prescott in the 1890's. It went far to bury the "Little Wop" image which he must now discard.

The next Spring found him addressing the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco. The political campaign of that year took him to Chicago and to a number of key cities in the North-Central region — including Northern New York, whose vote is important in electing Governors and Senators as well as Presidents. May of 1937 took him to Los Angeles, where he

told the Western regional meeting of the U. S. Conference of Mayors that Federal relief would have to be continued for another decade. "We may as well face the facts," he declared, "and realize that, no matter how profitable business and industry may be, this country will always face an unemployment problem and we may as well determine that the American people must provide work relief for men and women who are out of jobs through no fault of their own. Business is better. The stock market shows that. But we can't feed children on ticker tape." Travelling north from Los Angeles to San Francisco he found the city in the grip of a hotel strike and refused to cross the strikers' picket-lines. Instead he obtained accommodations in an apartment building and announced, "I am entirely in sympathy with the hotel strikers and hope there is a speedy settlement," to the most vigilante-minded city on the Pacific Coast, the city which had refused to allow General Hugh S. Johnson to enter its borders during the shipping strike on the ground that that sheep in wolf's clothing was a radical influence! And always he was travelling, inconspicuously, between New York and Washington, seeing Hopkins, seeing Ickes, seeing Roosevelt, seeing the Progressives on Capitol Hill.

And constantly he was repeating the ideas and principles of the Western Progressives to his little flock of seven million New Yorkers, who had heard the expression but had had little chance to study the meaning of "government of the people, by the people, for the people", and who had seen the snobbery of wealth and the will o' the wisp of competitive spending supplant the lusty old ideals of frontier democracy. On the 171st anniversary of the opening of a private school in New York City, he flung the "little red school house" in their privileged faces: "You boys are privileged in having the opportunity to come to a school where perhaps more time can be given to you individually. It is your duty to respond to this.

Don't any of you get the idea that there is any difference between you and the little boy around the corner." When invited to attend a Congress of the International Union of Local Authorities at Berlin, he declined with the caustic comment that local self-government had been "obliterated" in Germany, in tones which revealed as much of the Western detestation of bullying and tyranny as it did of vote-gathering among his Jewish constituents. He told the students of the Abraham Lincoln High School that the Emancipator was "the outstanding personality of American history" and hailed Lincoln as one who insisted on translating his humanitarian views and principles into reality instead of into philosophy or poetry. He improved this particular shining hour by saying that the Supreme Court had caused the Civil War but would not now be permitted to block a satisfactory solution to our present-day problems.

In fact, it is apparent that while LaGuardia was familiarizing the country with his personality as "America's No. 1 Mayor", he was also serving as "America's Ambassador to New York City." The glib statement that "New York is not America" can be only 90% exact so long as the metropolitan area contains a tenth of our people, but it is true enough that New York has cultivated an insularity which has increasingly cut off her people from the problems and ideas of the West and South. LaGuardia has been the first city official to undertake the difficult problem of introducing the two to each other and getting them acquainted. The anti-Tammany animus which led so many Americans to transfer their dislike to the metropolis itself, and the popular hatred of Wall Street which reinforced this mood, produced a dangerous tension in our public life which was to flare up in the summer of 1937, when Southern and Western Senators undertook to make a Federal housing program impracticable in New York City. It was not only good business but sound national policy that led the Mayor to

have railroads and steamship lines distribute millions of copies of a pamphlet advertising New York's advantages as a "tourist resort", with heavy emphasis on its musical and artistic advantages.

Such an enterprise would have been possible only to a man who himself possessed a Western background and knew the language people spoke west of the Hudson River. More important than this contribution to national unity, however, is the Mayor's achievement in making art and scientific government "good politics" in the conventional American sense.

II

It is here that the small salary the Government paid him during his years in the Consular Service turned out to be one of the best investments Washington ever made. For LaGuardia had served in the Austro-Hungarian Empire — the most magnificently administered country of pre-war Europe. Long after the unsound Habsburg policies had doomed the Empire, the Austrian Civil Service held it together by the sheer force of sound, non-partisan, non-political administration. More important still, the lovely cities of the old Empire — Buda-Pesth, Vienna, Trieste and Fiume — offered an example to the world of how pleasant life could be made for the mass of common working people through the intelligent application of art to municipal affairs. The concerts, beer-gardens, open-air cafés, recreation facilities were what had most appealed to him in Fiume. America had nothing like them.

The "new immigrants" who came from Central Europe remembered them and yearned for them, but in the hurly-burly of American life and the sordid struggle for existence in the great steel and concrete hives of the Western World, the new stock could only yearn for them, sentimentally, not recreate and modify them as typical American institutions. Only a Western American, with "new immigrant" blood and culture,

who had rediscovered them for himself, could turn the trick.

It is not an easy trick to turn. President and Mrs. Roosevelt tried to do it in national affairs and failed to do much better than encourage a rather patronizing, handicraft, social-worker activity in various parts of the country — an achievement as sentimental and insignificant as Henry Ford's collection of ox-yokes and other Early American antiques. A lanky basket-ball player from Iowa, named Harry Hopkins, received the staggering sum of \$4,800,000,000, with a substantial portion of which he was authorized to establish Federal Art Projects in connection with his work-relief program. This led to a considerable amount of what was branded as "boondoggling", but when the Federal Theatre Project achieved vital originality in *The Living Newspaper* and *The Cradle Will Rock*, it was promptly censored into silence by the dim-witted bureaucrats of the W.P.A. And when the Resettlement Administration hired Pare Lorentz to produce fine Government films, the enterprise was starved, frustrated and sabotaged by the Washington officials until only unusual enthusiasm and technical ability could complete and distribute the first two productions.

LaGuardia succeeded where the Roosevelts, Hopkins and Tugwell had failed. New York was used to saloon-politics. LaGuardia proved the importance of café-politics (one of the first acts of his administration was to authorize side-walk cafés in New York City), of swimming-pool politics, of park-politics, of concert-politics. And his city welcomed the change with an eagerness which is in striking contrast with the bucolic surliness with which the country took "the more abundant life" as administered by Hudson Valley patricians and Iowa social-workers.

In fact, Fiorello has made it obvious that he considers art to be one of the major problems of city administration. He is virtually the only important American official who has ever taken

this attitude and who has been as careful in formulating his policies on art as those on finance and administration. One of his first acts was to announce plans for a separate high school for music and art, which he hoped in time would develop into a conservatory under municipal control. A year later he gave out a major interview, expressing the opinion that nearly all people have a yearning for beauty in some form and, with the barest opportunity, display a spontaneous appreciation of art. He foresaw the possibility of extending the enjoyment of beauty to everyone and thus developing the truly aristocratic talents by democracy of opportunity. Still a year later, he actually dedicated his dreamed-of high school for art and music, and said: "I believe that this is one of the best contributions which I will be able to make to the educational system of the city as long as I am Mayor of New York" and he asked his critics, "What was so unusual in this idea of a high school with a special purpose? We have textile high schools, technical trade schools and business high schools. Why not a music school?"

By the beginning of 1937, art had become dominant in LaGuardia's propaganda. He proposed to link the country's non-commercial radio stations into a new broadcasting chain, with New York City's municipal station WNYC as one of the links. He prophesied that the Municipal Art Commission would become a New York institution and said that progress was being made in the selection of a site for a municipal art center second to none in the world. (Is this the "moral equivalent for war" of which William James wrote? The expression "second to none" is generally used only of competition in armaments.) He announced plans for a proposed Harlem community center in which the artistic, dramatic and musical talent of New York's colored population could find its opportunity. He was always showing his personal enthusiasm for music, visiting the clubroom of the Philharmonic Orchestra at Carnegie Hall and at the Lewisohn Stadium for chats about

music and musicians, much as old-style Tammany politicians invariably showed up at prize-fights and training-quarters and race-tracks. And the artists reciprocated his enthusiasm. The Fine Arts Federation of New York presented him with its plaque in recognition of his sympathetic interest and distinguished services to the arts, and he informed the committee of award that "the one big job ahead" was to create a great municipal art center, pointing out that it should contain space for the Metropolitan Opera and for a Symphony Hall, and describing himself as a "stand-pat conservative" in his preference for beauty in a work of art. Possibly no democrat in Western history, with the honorable exception of Tolstoy, has dared as much as LaGuardia to preach and practice the cult of beauty as an essential of social organization. Certainly few public officials (outside of Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany where art is recognized as a very convenient vehicle for propaganda) in modern times have conceived of beauty and its creation as an organic purpose of government. For this alone, if for nothing else, he has deserved well of the Republic.

The Republicans, however, found themselves baffled by his concept of "good government". The phrase has come to have a sanctimonious or a sentimental meaning among many Americans. The Mayor is responsible for bringing its European meaning to America. This requires some explanation. To the civic reformer, "good government" means out-voting the bosses, ending graft and corruption, and running the machine more economically. This is the sort of municipal government the great Tom Johnson, to whom LaGuardia has often been compared, gave the City of Cleveland, the sort of government the German Socialists gave the city of Milwaukee. This is essentially a businesslike attitude which wears thin the patience of the governed in a remarkably short time. LaGuardia's type of good government is the Central European type: the government an intelligent German Hausfrau would give her own

home — to make it beautiful, comfortable, economical to run, with the best of value for the money it costs, not to live beyond the means available and not to regard cheap government as the end desired any more than a cheaply-furnished home with low-grade food is desired by a prudent housewife. LaGuardia has often described his job as one of "house-keeping", and this is what he means: to make New York as fine a city as possible and to give the best of value for the money it costs its people to run their city.

Good government of this sort has nothing to do with national politics or with local partisanship. It is possible under an imperial autocracy, under socialism, under monarchy, under democracy. He has preached this sort of "non-partisan, non-political" government to people who thought he was talking the old rigmarole about American "reform politics". It is the greatest single political idea we have ever imported from Central Europe, and LaGuardia is the man who picked it up in Austria-Hungary and domesticated it here, much as the American Consul in Lisbon once acquired some merino sheep belonging to the Spanish Crown and shipped them to New Hampshire during the Napoleonic Wars, thus founding the American wool industry.

As consistently as he preached art for New York's people has he preached scientific government for New York. His inaugural "oath of the young men of Athens" began a long crusade for expert city administration. He was always getting on the nerves of the Republicans by harping on "non-partisan, non-political government". He told 250 graduates of New York University that he hoped, as the crowning achievement of his administration, "to establish permanently a municipal career, so that young men entering the public service know that they may enter and go right to the top". While the conservatives took pride in his difficult achievement in "balancing" the City's budget, and the *New York Times* declared that he com-

bined "the good government aspiration of Mitchel to many of the human attributes of Gaynor; his appeal is neither to mass nor to class, but to all those who, realizing the obstacles, want to see this city governed at once more wisely and more humanely", the Mayor was opening swimming-pools, using the Police War Memorial Fund to build eight "memorial" playgrounds, bringing thousands of previously exempt city jobs into Civil Service, reclassifying, improving and reorganizing the Civil Service, and striving — in the teeth of Wall Street — to save money on electricity by building a municipal power-plant. He cut his own salary from \$40,000 to \$22,500 a year to save money on the budget, but he announced plans to reorganize the city's college system to provide special institutions for teaching technology and the science of government. He promoted a noise-abatement campaign to make life more tolerable in the crowded acres of brick warrens and put up with the crotchets and curses of Bob Moses because the latter was a genius in planning and developing public parks and playgrounds. LaGuardia was, in point of fact, New York's burgomaster rather than its Mayor.

As a result, he succeeded in extracting most of the sting from reform politics and in making sound city administration as dramatic and exciting as Jimmy Walker and the Tammany henchmen had made the gorgeous graft of yesteryear. This, too, was something new in American politics — to rob good government of the holier-than-thou fussiness which had always doomed previous reforms, by substituting the open-air playground, the concert, the municipal park and beach, the sidewalk café, and the clean and quieter street for the corner-saloon, fire-house, police-station, gambling-den, speakeasy, brothel politics of the bawdy old City which he had found when he first returned from Trieste to make his way in his native land.

In so doing, he emphasized and underlined the contribution

which the "new immigration" — of which he had become the synthetic symbol — was making to the stuffy provincialism of the old stock Americans and the entertaining irresponsibility of the Irish who had followed on their heels. For the first time, it appeared that the melting-pot was not simply designed to convert "aliens" into standardized Americans but that it was destined to do some much-needed melting of the "natives" themselves — to produce a new kind of American and hence a new kind of America.

III

The idea that scientific administration of public affairs can be as attractive, enjoyable and worth possessing as a streamlined automobile, a combination radio-Victrola or a house in the more thickly mortgaged suburbs bears no more relation to standard Anglo-Saxon political morality than religion bears to test-tubes and air-planes. It stamps LaGuardia as a new type of American, a man of the world in a sense that neither Roosevelt nor LaFollette is a man of the world. At best they are worldly Americans, with a hangover of patrician condescension or frontier earnestness which wobbles between self-righteousness and naïveté, while LaGuardia is a civilized man in the sense that Edouard Herriot or Leon Blum are civilized men.

Where the goal of metropolitan success has always been marked by a retreat to Long Island and Florida, to steam-yachts and uneconomic country-estates, to trips to Europe and donations to the Metropolitan Museum and the Opera, LaGuardia lives simply and well. He and his family dwell in a small six-room flat in an old apartment building on upper Fifth Avenue — on the edge of his old Twentieth District. The furnishings are simple and in pleasant taste, with a number of nice etchings and water-colors, graceful bronze and marble nude statuettes, and a miniature of the first Napoleon! There

is a radio, not many books — LaGuardia is not a bookish man for all his expressed longing for time to read — and one colored maid. The Mayor, like so many other New Yorkers and Europeans, finds his diversions outside of his house. He is a drinking man though not a heavy drinker, taking two or three Scotch highballs at the end of a working day in order to relax. He thinks with his vocal chords rather than with his fingers, and never wrote a speech in advance of delivery until required to do so for the radio. He has an almost Rooseveltian zest for action, a super-Rooseveltian instinct for standing “a little to the left of center” of the picture.

To an unusual degree, he is representative of the contribution which the semi-tropical peoples are making to our public life and our basic civilization. The “new immigration” is largely composed of Jews, Italians, people from Southeastern Europe, and Negroes who moved north after the World War to staff Northern industry and escape the race repressions of the Solid South. Many of them also came from the West Indies — all of them represent peoples who have escaped a very real sort of tyranny.

It is not easy to deceive this sort of people and they rarely deceive themselves. Tammany used them as political cannon-fodder for years, by the simple device of paying for their votes, but the World War and Prohibition changed things profoundly. “Aliens” whose lives have been conscripted in the service of the country do not settle down with becoming docility into a status of inferiority thereafter. The “native-stock” reaction after the World War revealed a fear that the old order of American institutions was in danger. Prohibition was part of this reaction and it proved a boomerang, for it offered a means of amassing profits and power quite as tempting as the opportunity which the old British Navigation Laws and the slave trade had offered to the God-fearing Yankee merchants and ship-owners. The effort to elect Al Smith President in 1928

led to a high tide of political bigotry labelled as anti-Catholic but actually anti-“alien”, an attempt to keep the post-1890 group of immigrants in permanent subjection to the Nordics of North America.

Despite all repression and discouragement, they pressed forward. Jewish success in business and banking had long been proverbial, the Jewish cultural contribution now became impressive. Frequently pandering to vulgarity, as on Broadway and in Hollywood, the Jews also produced a George Gershwin, a Morrie Ryskind, a Jascha Heifetz, to stand beside men like Bernard M. Baruch, Dr. Mordecai Ezekiel, Judge Benjamin Cardozo, and Henry Morgenthau. Whereas thirty years ago American Jews were known principally as successful merchants, money-lenders and entertainers, they were now reacting to the greater freedom of the New World and producing farm economists, statesmen, artists and scientists. The Italians, who had arrived later, were slower to gain a foothold. But they were pressing forward in other lines than those suggested by Toscanini, Caruso and Pirelli. There were Giannini, the banker, Frank Capra, the movie director, and Gene Sarazen, the golfer. There was the fact that America's three greatest sea-ports were governed by Italian-Americans — LaGuardia of New York, Angelo Rossi of San Francisco, and Robert Maestri of New Orleans. And there was Edward Corsi, formerly in charge at Ellis Island — to show what Americans of Italian ancestry could contribute to America. The rise of the Negroes was even more phenomenal. Where Southern Negroes had been segregated into Jim Crow accommodations, the New York Negroes began to create an unusual Afro-American civilization in the Harlem district, producing singers like Paul Robeson and Roland Hayes, writers like Countee Cullen, James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, and Claude McKay, educators like W. E. B. Dubois, chemists like George W. Caver, as well as a growing list of highly-educated and com-

petent scientists, physicians, lawyers and preachers. While America was laughing at Marcus Garvey and Father Divine — much as it laughed at Al Jolson and Eddie Cantor — the colored people in New York were showing that they could assimilate the heritage and expand the frontiers of Western civilization.

The most fundamental contribution of these new citizens was the least appreciated — in the realm of morals, where the “new immigration” began laughing away Anglo-Saxon hypocrisy much as Cervantes had laughed Spain’s professional chivalry away. The Jews, the Italians and the Negroes saw America from the bottom with the educated eyesight of those who are “tolerated”. In alcoholic statutory morality they made their mark on Prohibition and proved that liberty does not necessarily imply habitual drunkenness and that self-control is possible without abstention. In the more stormy matter of sex morality, the “new immigration” proved — as the Negroes had proved for years — that prurience and promiscuity are not the alternatives which civilization must face. The Jews in particular had prided themselves for thousands of years on the purity of their home-life and if the lively Latins tended at times to make sex a sport or a business, they did it with an innocence and abandon that had little of Nordic furtiveness or Celtic nastiness. That knowledge of birth control, dissemination of sex hygiene and acceptance of literary and theatrical frankness do not necessarily involve the extinction of the human race was a corollary to the rationalism of the new group of Americans.

They challenged the deadly solemnity of the Anglo-Saxon, who is determined to “do good” no matter how painful it may be to those on the receiving end of his benevolent intentions, with the gayety of a breed which has realized that life is short, death certain, and that there is no sense in drawing long faces over human destiny. The early settlers had been drawn from

the more lugubrious of Protestant sects and the hardships of frontier life had reinforced their conviction that pleasure and sin were inseparable. This frontier philosophy of American seriousness had lasted from the time of Andrew Jackson down to its last great champion, Woodrow Wilson. Now the simple pleasures of life were replacing the pristine sternness of American civilization, as the United States learned the great lesson of the Old World.

The result in time was the great social upheaval which placed the "new immigration" on a level with the old-stock, the silent revolution which is still going on. In 1928, it was possible to damn Al Smith beyond redemption as an Irish Catholic and son of an East Side immigrant. By 1936, Roosevelt scored his greatest electoral victory — almost destroying the old Republican Party — by the combined votes of those whom for generations the Nordic Americans had contemptuously called "kikes", "yids", "wops", "dagoes", "hunkies", "polacks", "niggers" and "greasers".

For this achievement, LaGuardia was in part responsible, just as he is in part its symbol. The "second-rate citizens" of 1928 can never again be thrust back into the depths to which Nordic-minded Americans would thrust them, just as the Southern Negroes could not be thrust back after the World War. In fact, much of the political history of 1937 reflected the attempt of the Republican conservatives to win the support of the Catholic clergy against the "Communism" of the New Deal. A growing effort was made, particularly among that section of the Catholic hierarchy which sympathized strongly with the foes of the Mexican and Spanish Republics, to reproduce on American soil the "holy war" between Fascism and Marxism which was raging in various parts of Europe. This effort reflected to an unusual degree both the Anglo-Saxon capacity for self-deception and the imperial instinct to divide and rule. The result was to make New York City the political

battle-ground for issues which had little direct relationship to American problems and for emotional borrowings which could only confuse American efforts to deal intelligently with the workings of their democracy.

In no particular had the Anglo-Saxon capacity for self-deception been better illustrated than by the conservative charge that the New Deal was trying to establish a "totalitarian" dictatorship on the model of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin.

For America, which proudly proclaimed itself to be democratic, had developed all the preliminary attributes of economic and political Fascism long before Lenin seized power in Russia or Mussolini organized the March on Rome. During the three generations of Republican supremacy, for Lincoln's "government of the people, by the people, for the people" had been substituted a government of, by and for Big Business: i.e. the heavy industries, the utilities and their financial manipulators. For many practical purposes, there was but one political party, since both Southern Democrats and Northern Republicans worshipped the Golden Calf and responded to the interests of Wall Street. Both Cleveland and Wilson had demonstrated the essential one-party government of pre-depression America, and any threat of real change — as under Bryan in 1896 or LaFollette in 1924 — had been crushed with indignation and contempt.

Irresponsibly reactionary was America's substitution of a sacred dogma — the Constitution as interpreted by a Federal Judiciary and a Supreme Court which had been labelled as sacred and untouchable — for the direct processes of popular government. In monarchical England, as in Bismarckian Germany, the electorate could hope to improve its fortunes by political action, even to the extent of overthrowing the arbitrary power of the British House of Lords and establishing State Socialism in the old Reich. This was not possible in

America, where the decision of a single irresponsible judge on the basis of legalistic dogma could stop the application of any national law, and where five out of nine Justices on the Supreme Court had repeatedly asserted the right to say what was, and what was not, "Constitutional". Behind these judges stood the glittering hierarchy of the "constitutional lawyers", men who excelled in the art of defending before these sacred Judges the great moneyed and industrial interests against regulation, control, reform or ownership by the representatives of the people.

Irresponsibly reactionary, too, was the speed and ruthlessness with which Constitutional liberties were set aside whenever corporate property was involved. Industrial conflict in America assumed the character of civil warfare, as the private armies of the employers and the subservient peace authorities light-heartedly shot down workmen, deported citizens, suppressed freedom of speech, of assembly and of the press, and gave the country the spectacle of such bloodshed as the Homestead Strike, the Pullman Strike, the Ludlow Massacre, the Herrin Massacre, Harlan County, the West Virginia battles, and the Chicago Memorial Day Massacre of 1937. And in an emergency, volunteer armies such as the American Legion and the Ku Klux Klan rallied to the support of the bankers and manufacturers and Chambers of Commerce. By any test, an honest historian could only conclude that American Big Business had begun to acquire most of the benefits and had assumed none of the responsibilities of what liberals called "Fascism" when it happened in Europe.

Objectively considered, the New Deal elections of 1932, '34 and '36, were part of a liberal counter-revolution against the most greedy, obstinate and irresponsible controlling group in the world. Conservatives had instinctively stored up ammunition against the coming storm of democracy by free use of the labels "Socialist", "Red", "Radical" and "Communist". The

country's capacity for not allowing the left hand to know what the right is doing made it possible for conservatives also to tag the revolt against American reaction as "Fascism"! But on the whole, by 1937, they found that it was better politics to brand the New Deal as "Communistic" or "Marxian" and to keep in circulation the idea that, because of men like Louis Brandeis, Professor Felix Frankfurter, Governor Lehman and other American Jews in the New Deal Administration, all reform was part of a "Jewish plot". When challenged on the Supreme Court, they had no hesitation in stirring up Southern prejudice against the Negro and in threatening the Catholics with religious persecution if the American Congress received some of the legislative authority of the British Parliament.

Now the American answer to the menace of Fascism was not Communism and had no connection with the sentimental Marxism among certain intellectual groups on the Eastern Seaboard. The American answer was Progressivism, Western Progressivism at that! — a purely practical and undogmatic effort to find suitable solutions for real problems. The first stage of this process was the effective political enfranchisement of the foreign-born and "new immigrant" voters who had always been regarded and treated as second-class citizens. The second stage was the appearance of a real labor movement, to match the technological and industrial advances of mass-production. The C.I.O. and the American Labor Party were part and parcel of this secondary process, accompanied by permissive legislation at Washington, as the semi-skilled industrial workers endeavored to obtain social justice and economic democracy in terms of their own employment.

By the summer of 1937, this process had been temporarily checked by one of the major triumphs of political journalism. The violence and disorder which reactionary employers had been careful to make inseparable from strikes; the shock which followed the discovery that if workers simply "sit down" by

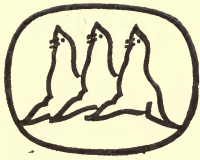
their machines it is difficult to dislodge them without endangering valuable equipment and impossible to resume production until the workers are either satisfied or removed; the general impatience of those who, enjoying renewed profits themselves, refused to believe that prosperity was not general; sectionalism and boss-controlled politics — all these combined to frighten the South and alienate the West from the effort of industrial labor to improve its position. And as late as the spring of 1937, the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York was urging that no one accepting public relief should be allowed to vote.

As Fiorello H. LaGuardia approached the election of 1937, therefore, all the signs pointed to an impressive combination of conservative Republicans and machine Democrats against him and against any liberal candidate who proposed to substitute social justice and economic liberty for the time-honored rule of Big Business, the Bourbons and the Bosses.

This is what made LaGuardia a dangerous man for liberals and progressives to let be beaten. He had worked his way up from close to the bottom, and by his own strength of character and civilized personality, he had combined the simple pragmatism of the Western Progressives with the best of the Old World principles of culture and scientific government. Despite defects of temperament and errors of judgment, he had proved to America that a son of the "new immigration" could be a better American — measured by any standards — than the best of the Old Guard Republicans, and could stand on an equal plane with men like Roosevelt, Norris and LaFollette in restoring the forgotten Lincolnian and Jacksonian traditions to our public life.

The lines of interest and of action are converging on 1940. 1937 may be too early for him to catch the boat and, though his defeat in New York might well discourage his fellow-Progressives in the struggle to substitute a working democracy

for Big Business domination, he has shown a capacity to rise higher after every misfortune. There is the Governorship of the State of New York, a United States Senatorship, a Vice-Presidency or the Presidency itself before him, if the new and vital forces which he represents come to fruition in the next few years. He has put as much into the new political game which Americans are playing as any living man, and in studying him and his career Americans can foresee the possible future of their social life, their public institutions and their civilization.



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